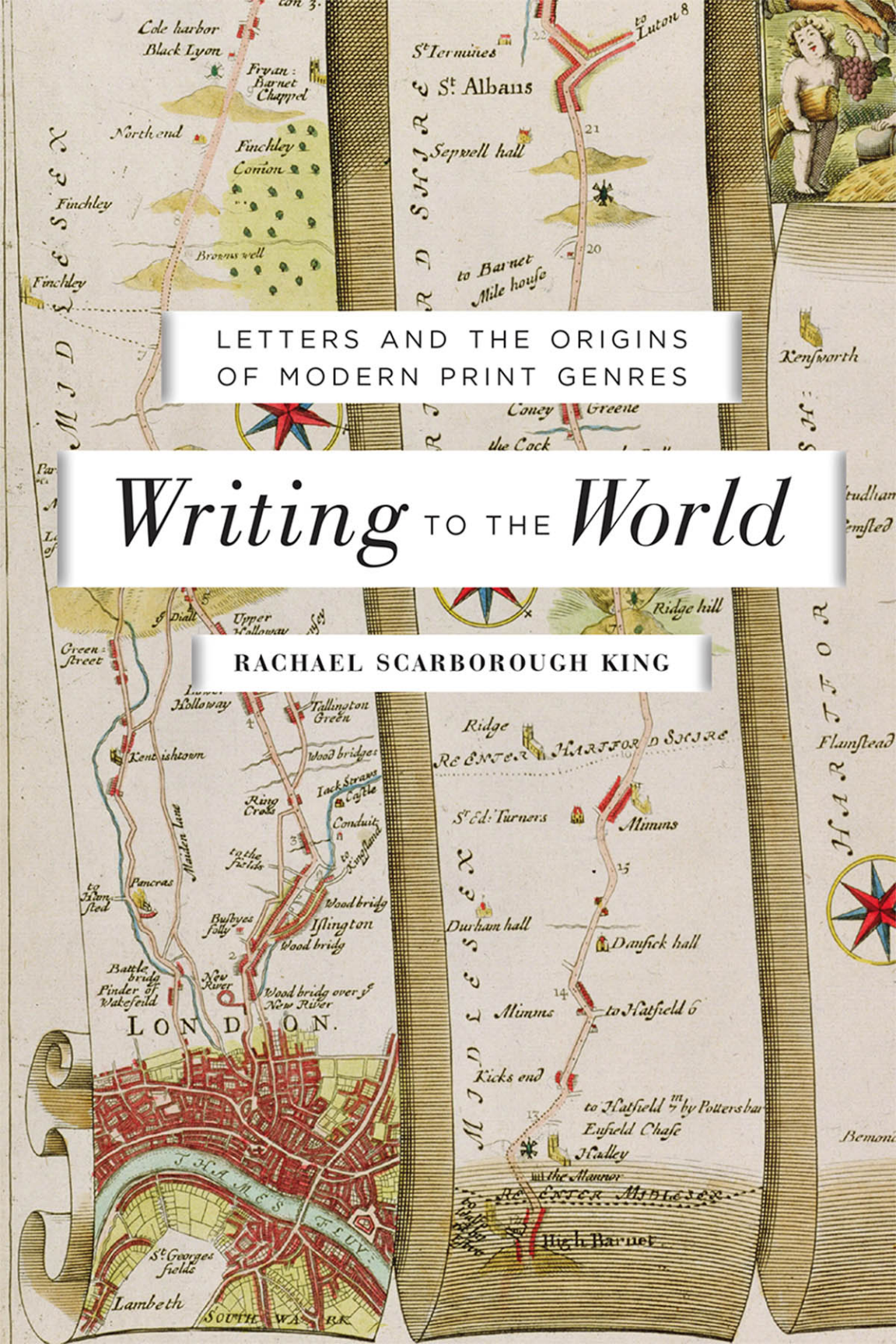


LETTERS AND THE ORIGINS OF MODERN PRINT GENRES

# *Writing* TO THE *World*

RACHAEL SCARBOROUGH KING

VISIT…

# Writing to the World

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Letters and the Origins of Modern Print Genres

RACHAEL SCARBOROUGH KING

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*For Ady, my best correspondent*

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# Writing to the World

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# Introduction

The titans of eighteenth-century print could not avoid corresponding with their readers. As consumers confronted the boom in new print genres that characterized the period—from the newspaper and periodical essay to the scientific journal, book review, biography, and the era's most controversial new type, the novel—they drafted handwritten responses to writers, printers, characters, and authorial figures. In his 1705 preface to *A Review of the Affairs of France*, Daniel Defoe protested "that Receiving or Answering Letters of Doubts, Difficulties, Cases and Questions" had not been his intention in starting the periodical, "and I could be heartily Glad, the Reader of this Paper would excuse me from it yet,—But I see it cannot be, and the World will have it done."[1] Joseph Addison boasted of his "Multitude of Correspondents" in the *Spectator* but scolded those who "fill their Letters with private Scandal," declaring, "it is not my Design to be a Publisher of Intreagues and Cuckoldoms, or to bring little infamous Stories out of their present lurking Holes into broad Day-light."[2] And 40 years later, Samuel Johnson as Mr. Rambler noted, "I look upon every letter, whether it contains encomiums or reproaches, as an equal attestation of rising credit."[3] Such epistolary interactions were fostered by the works themselves, which depended on the genre of the letter to come into being, to structure their texts, to format their pages, and to circulate to readers. Defoe's *Review* included the "Mercure Scandale" section in which he answered readers' queries; in *Tatler* No. 7 Richard Steele claimed that without epistolary assistance he had "not a Month's Wit more" and proposed to "leave it in the Choice of my Gentle Readers, whether I shall hear from them, or they hear no more from me."[4] For these pioneering periodicalists, soliciting, receiving, publishing, and responding to reader letters was an essential feature of print authorship.

The reflections of Defoe, Addison, Steele, and Johnson offer a window into the changes roiling the eighteenth-century media landscape, in which an ever-growing number of emerging printed forms considered their own rela-

tionship to existing modes of communication—in particular, to the handwritten letter. Individually and jointly, these authors were addressing a question at the heart of this investigation: How do genres of writing transform during periods of major technological and media shift? This book tracks the relationship of genre to medium, asking how the arrival and spread of new media—the material forms in which texts are transmitted—enable and even necessitate the development of new genres—the conceptual categories that readers and authors use to denominate varieties of writing. I will return to my understanding of "genre" and "medium" below. Here I proceed from the observation that new genres proliferate at moments of media change, from the eighteenth-century takeoff in print that brought us newspapers, periodicals, novels, and biographies, to our contemporary digital turn, which so far has seen the email, the blog, the text message, the tweet, the web series, the meme, and the Wikipedia article. In order to explain this phenomenon, I propose the concept of the "bridge genre," a genre that facilitates change by providing writers and readers with paths across shifting media landscapes. Bridge genres connect old and new media: they transfer existing textual conventions to emerging modes of composition and circulation, a function that provides stability and continuity during what are otherwise times of fluctuation and reordering. They exhibit a set of features that remain recognizable in different material incarnations, extending these features into fresh arenas. Both adaptable and accessible in nature, bridge genres allow readers and writers to engage new media, experiment with current ones, and modify their expectations of the forms in which they encounter literature.

At specific historical moments, particular genres take on the task of bridging. That is, as a shift in media takes place, certain genres prove especially useful in helping make sense of that shift. Fifteenth-century incunables reproduced the format, page layout, and content of existing Biblical and classical manuscripts. In the early modern period, sermons drew on oral traditions to initiate a range of new religio-political printed texts. And today, many journalists continue to employ print standards of length and scope for articles that appear online, although the digital medium is starting to change those standards—and to affect the features of printed newspapers. In this book, I focus on the long eighteenth century, a period in many ways analogous to the present when readers and writers engaged in an extensive debate about the tendencies and effects of a new medium: print. While the printing press had existed since the fifteenth century, its status changed in the late 1600s and early 1700s. With an increase in the overall quantity of print in circulation and

development of cheap ephemera, the material conditions of the print marketplace transformed, and the century would see an efflorescence of new genres. Dror Wahrman has named this the era of "Print 2.0," arguing that the transition to periodical publication, in a field now dominated by newspapers and magazines, meant that "print *was* new in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries."[5] This market also expanded at an exponential pace as the century advanced.[6] But these were not seamless or self-evident changes, and many bemoaned the new media regime "where every Man thinks what he lists, speaks what he thinks, writes what he speaks, and prints what he writes . . . carried on by a kind of frantick Figgary."[7] Adrian Johns has shown that anonymity, piracy, and plagiarism were major concerns for readers and writers of print, and the first book "reputed to have been printed without any errors" did not appear until 1760.[8] The naturalization of print involved ongoing and protracted negotiations, as authors and consumers compared the new medium with the earlier ones of speech and manuscript.

At this transitional moment, I argue, the primary bridge genre was the letter, whose ubiquity from interpersonal postal networks to printed letter collections reflected a special salience. Epistolary writing connected manuscript and print forms of communication; many of the period's foremost innovations in genre emerged through the incorporation of letters, while at the same time letter writing expanded and diversified as a communicative practice. The personal letter was the common factor enabling a host of distinctively modern printed genres to come into being and appeal to readers; it undergirded the literary experiments that pervaded eighteenth-century print culture. Letters in the period were able to transition between handwriting and printing, orienting readers within the new media landscape by offering interpretive guideposts. I draw together four of these new kinds of print to show how they constitute a complex of epistolary interconnections: each emerged via the bridging function of the letter. Newspapers relied on letters from "foreign correspondents" for content; periodicals initiated interactions with readers in the form of letters to the editor; biographical "lives" used letters as documentary evidence; and novels deployed them to transmit unfolding narratives. The appearance in print of the letter—the flexible layout signaling the transmission of information and sentiment from one correspondent to another—connected these developing genres at the same time as each one's emphasis upon varying epistolary features allowed for increasing differentiation and diversification. Beginning in the seventeenth century and accelerating in the eighteenth, the ancient genre of the letter took on a new central func-

tion: to help readers familiar with this everyday scribal practice understand and interact with the many new ways to consume printed commodities.

Scholars have long accepted the epistolary origins of the novel, seeing the novelistic letter as a means to convey private experience and individual subjectivity.[9] But the letter played a different role in early newspapers, periodical essays, and biographies—a fact that should also help us rethink its contributions to the developing novel genre. All four of these genres initially featured the extensive use of printed letters typically laid out in a standard format from salutation to subscription, while they also made frequent reference to their own dependence upon postal networks to gather copy, to interact with readers and contributors, to substantiate their claims, and to circulate to consumers. This book does not offer another interpretation of the rise of the novel, but rather positions the novel genre as part of a larger literary-historical transition wherein the print medium was able to permeate textual production by continually connecting to handwriting in the form of the personal letter. Letters were at hand: they were mentally and physically available tools for smoothing the transition from existing to emerging media. Authors and printers experimenting with new genres relied on pre-existing understandings of how to read and write letters, which stressed an ongoing interaction between writer and reader, a direct source of firsthand knowledge, a self-reflexive attention to the procedures of written communication, and an address to a specific reader or group of readers. The presence of fictional and authentic letters made new media accessible to new readers and writers, who adapted to the prominence of print by placing it in the context of handwritten interpersonal communication.

## Letters and Posts

The eighteenth-century incorporation of letters into printed texts both brought manuscript conventions into the scope of print circulation and reworked those conventions in ways that had a lasting impact on theories of communication and correspondence. Jürgen Habermas has called the eighteenth century "the century of the letter," recognizing the importance of letters but miscategorizing them as solely private documents where "the individual unfolded himself in his subjectivity."[10] Instead, across a wide array of genres letters were quasi-public texts; the individual, private missive developed over the course of the century as one of many epistolary varieties. The manuscript personal letter was a social communication that could range over commercial, political, informational, and sentimental functions. Thus the

genre of the letter—a shorthand encompassing epistolary formatting on the page as well as the actual letters that supported the creation and distribution of texts—could sustain new kinds of print in a variety of factual and fictional contexts. There were a number of structural and systemic reasons why letters should become especially important during the long eighteenth century. The letter was a classical genre, a fact reinforced by its continuing presence in standard pedagogy via the Latin epistles of Cicero and Seneca. Letters were potent symbols of the communicative process itself, embodying both the possibilities and problems of transferring thought and feeling in physical form: sending a letter made it possible to communicate over distance, but also created the conditions for loss, interception, or misinterpretation.[11] Letters could contain an almost unlimited variety of content within a relatively short, bounded space, making them adaptable conduits. As Johnson wrote of this "species of composition," "none is of more various or frequent use, through the whole subordination of human life."[12]

For the educated elite, the letter was culturally available: it was an obvious form of personal and professional interaction, and epistolary circles formed the foundation of many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literary and scientific communities. Lisa Jardine writes, "those who passed through early modern English classrooms . . . regarded the familiar letter as a highly crafted form of communication, which could act as an intermediary between separated individuals linked by bonds of shared feeling and an emerging trans-European intellectual ideal of *humanitas*."[13] But in the early modern period, this Ciceronian view clashed with a range of pragmatic functions for the letter, and printed vernacular examples were rare; at the start of the seventeenth century, no individual's letters had been published as a stand-alone collection in English, despite many such volumes in French and Italian.[14] As state postal systems were established in the mid- to late seventeenth century, the scope of the letter's influence metastasized. The development of a postal system meant that the mail, which previously had been restricted to government agents and private couriers, was now theoretically open to anyone able to pay the price of admission. In some places, such as London, that price was as low as a penny. This shift gradually allowed letters to filter through the social spectrum and to become almost subconscious facts of life. As letter writing transitioned from educational training to everyday activity, the established letter genre became a tool for facilitating the rise of print.

The letter thus offers a crucial case study for re-examining the manuscript-print relationship from the Restoration through the start of the Victorian

period, an unusual periodization that I argue constituted a "postal era" beginning with the establishment of a state postal system and ending with the major postal reforms of 1839–40. One of the claims of this book is that tracing a genre network—following the unexpected connections between diverse forms that a bridge genre like the letter creates—rather than relying on a predetermined literary period can reveal patterns and influences that would otherwise be obscured.[15] In the postal era, the reigning paradigm of communication was the letter. In both material and metaphorical terms, it underlay and elucidated the new kinds of print that were transforming the media landscape. The act of transmitting a message from one entity to another, whether in speech or writing, was usefully encapsulated by the process of composing, addressing, sending, and receiving letters—which were often described as transcribed speech. As John Tavernier wrote in the introduction to his epistolary manual *The Entertaining Correspondent*, letters "materialize our ideas, and make 'em as lasting as the ink and paper, their vehicles," offering a "sixth sense." He continued: "Letter-writing is but a sort of literary conversation, and that you write to the person absent, in the manner you would speak to him, if present."[16] Or, as the author of *The Lady's Preceptor* added, letters are "Emanations of ourselves, by which we do, as it were, talk and act in several Places at a time."[17] Like the digital network today, in the postal era the genre of the letter served as a metonym for spoken and written interaction in an increasingly mediated world.

This symbolic status was one reason that the letter became the primary bridge genre of the period. Letters were able to act as framing devices for communication across media. While scholars often assume that by the early eighteenth century print culture had replaced scribal circulation as the dominant media system, following the network of printed letters reveals an ongoing negotiation between manuscript and print centuries after the invention of the press.[18] As Christina Lupton notes, "acceptance of a new medium can coexist with a high level of critical consciousness about its presence."[19] Letters had a usefully in-between media status that gave them great flexibility: they were meant to be the nearest transcription of oral conversation that writing could approximate, while at the same time their literary pedigree demonstrated that they were premeditated, rule-bound constructions. Tavernier highlighted these complications when he wrote that "there is no obtaining a natural, easy stile, and a graceful manner . . . but by practice; custom overcomes many difficulties."[20] A "natural" mode of letter writing was the result of study and circumspection. Letters self-reflexively bridged speech, manuscript, and print;

manuscript letters presented themselves as a "silent art of speaking,"[21] while printed works made reference to handwriting and paper folds in attempting to mimic the manuscript medium. This multimodal status made the letter a useful genre for a literary sphere in which the hierarchical boundaries between media of publication were still under construction.

Early modern and long-eighteenth-century letters thus belie binary distinctions between manuscript and print and, correspondingly, between the contemporary categories of letter and novel, private and public, and feminine and masculine that are often thought to map onto each medium. Edward Villiers Rippingille's 1819 painting *The Post Office* displays the communal, multimedia activity of receiving mail: the arrival of the post gathers men and women, young and old, rich and poor—even, it appears, literate and illiterate—around the provincial post office (figure I.1). The townspeople stand in groups reading letters as well as the newspapers that have traveled from London via the stagecoach, whose bugle-blowing post boy announces its departure for the next stop on the route. The mail engenders a range of emotions in the figures, from excitement, to elation, to curiosity, to despondency, to despair. As the painting makes clear, in the postal era readers and writers did not assume that letters had a special relationship to privacy or the domestic sphere; they were written in the presence of others who gave vocal input or added notes, and they were read aloud upon receipt.[22] James Daybell identifies in the letter genre a "high degree of inter-textuality between oral, print and manuscript media: letters written to be read aloud were scribally recorded or memorised for later transcription; printed correspondence was written out by hand and copied into miscellanies or notebooks; manuscript copies were published by printers."[23] Personal letters frequently enclosed printed materials such as newspapers, and many printed documents left room for handwritten additions or mailing addresses. The fact that many letters circulated within epistolary communities meant there were no hard-and-fast lines between published and unpublished; as Gary Schneider argues, the "boundaries between actual and imaginary letters, between print letters transferred from manuscript and those calculated for the press, are often blurry ones."[24] Writers could have little expectation of secrecy while a letter was in transit since correspondence, especially during periods of war or political upheaval, was subject to detention and surveillance by government officials. Even the king was not immune: during the Civil War the Parliamentary tactic of publishing purloined letters culminated in the 1645 printing of a self-contradictory packet from Charles I, given the title *The Kings Cabinet Opened*.[25] The idea of the

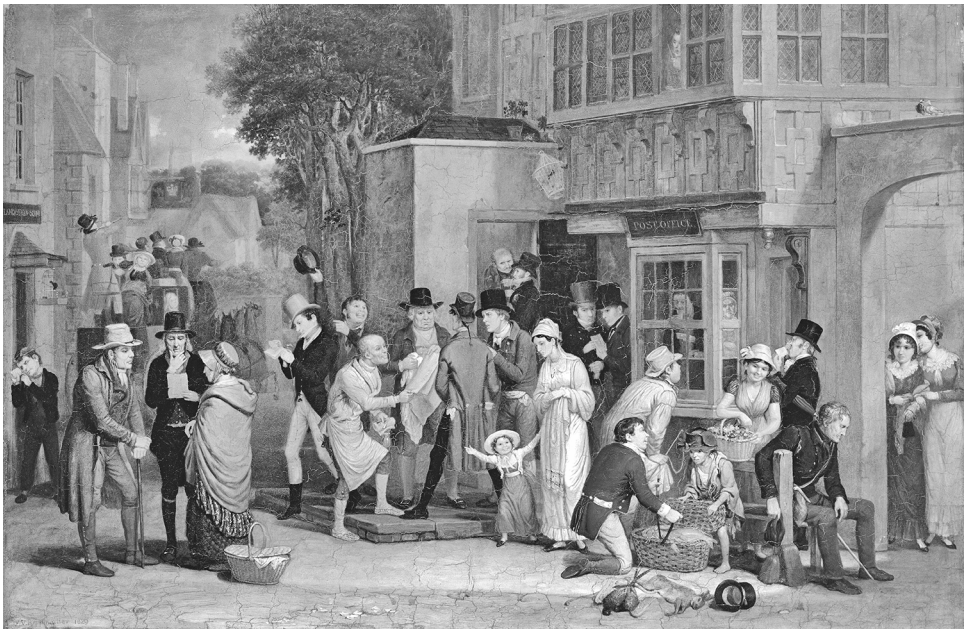



*Figure I.1.* Edward Villiers Rippingille, *The Post Office*, 1819, oil on canvas, Leeds Museums and Galleries, Lotherton Hall, UK/Bridgeman Images.

manuscript letter as the archetypal "private" genre is a later—late eighteenth- to mid-nineteenth-century—construction that has been retroactively applied to earlier letter-writing norms.

This dynamic becomes evident if we trace representative moments of bridging in the period. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, public political debate was frequently conducted in epistolary form; as Hugh Blair, professor of rhetoric and belles lettres at the University of Edinburgh, wrote in 1783, "There is no subject whatever, on which one may not convey his thoughts to the Public in the form of a Letter."[26] The period saw the emergence and standardization of the letter pamphlet, a genre that put political, as well as religious and scientific, opinions into the context of a missive between two correspondents, with the conventional title "A Letter from a Gentleman in Town to His Friend in the Country." Most pamphlets, however, offered some variation on this standard, providing points of reference for the reader: *A Letter from a Whig Gentleman in Town to His Friend in the Country* (1712), *Letters from a Gentleman in the North of Scotland to His Friend in London* (1754), *A Letter from Phocion to the Considerate Citizens of New-York, on the*

*Politics of the Day* (1784, by Alexander Hamilton). The English Short Title Catalogue records more than 6,500 variations on the title, comprising book, newspaper, and pamphlet formats, between 1650 and 1800.[27] Because of their ephemeral and apparently disingenuous nature—we tend to assume that these are not "real" letters—the genre has often been either dismissed or ignored, seen as evidence of a still-forming public sphere or an example of proto-epistolary fiction. But if we look carefully at the work of the letter in these pamphlets, their epistolary nature becomes more noteworthy. In fact, it becomes clear that the value of invoking letters was not primarily to trick readers into believing the texts were authentic or to disguise the author's true identity but rather to guide readers on how to interpret this new kind of factious, ephemeral print.

The authors of epistolary pamphlets not only used a basic epistolary form but also incorporated features of personal letters into their texts, in particular discussing the processes of postal communication that allowed the printed work to appear. Most pamphlets began with a description of the other letters to which the authors were responding, following the typical opening of an eighteenth-century epistle. With the concept of "the news" still new, the letter pamphlets enacted for readers the procedures by which information could be circulated, debated, and verified. The author of *A Letter from a Gentleman in Philadelphia to His Friend in the Country* (1742) began, "Sir, I received yours; in which you inform me the following Opinions are positively asserted and industriously propagated among you," going on to outline the technical details for an upcoming vote.[28] *A Letter from a Gentleman in the Country to His Friend in Town* (1732) opened, "I thank you for the Paper you were so good to send me, upon the Dangerous Consequences of long Parliaments and Assemblies."[29] And *A Letter from a Gentleman in New-York, to His Friend in London* (1733) provided the path of the letter: "Sir, I received Your Letter by way of *Boston*; You tell me you have seen the Votes of our Assembly."[30] Casting the publication in the form of a letter led authors to explicitly discuss the transmission routes of news items and to provide their sources of verification. It also implied ongoing communication, just part of which was making its way into print; writers thus used epistolarity to display their participation in a news network. Although only some pamphlets maintained epistolary form throughout the text, they used the parameters of discussion—the "sender" and "recipient"—to help readers interpret the information.

In an expanding news marketplace in which authors almost never signed their works, epistolary pamphlets laid claim to transparency and eyewitness

knowledge, even if these claims were often unverifiable. However, many of the pamphlets actually were intercepted or repurposed letters, rather than fictional ones; this possibility meant that readers saw the pamphlets as lying on a continuum with personal letters rather than as fundamentally different from them. Michael Warner has argued that such pamphlets, particularly in the American revolutionary context, used the "generic pose of correspondence" to draw a contrast between the privacy of manuscript and the publicity of print, the proper medium of the public sphere.[31] In his view, the pamphlets deny rather than activate the properties of manuscript communication. But the frequency of this form of political discourse implies a larger purpose for the bridge genre of the letter, whose open-ended flexibility allowed a variety of content to be contained within a manageable length of text. The letter showed the intersection of manuscript and print and the interpenetration of public and private in the arena of news: readers saw that important topics could be profitably discussed by two "nobodies," anonymous figures loosely assigned to social roles. Epistolary pamphlets enabled participation as the letter encoded the expectation of response, which often materialized with follow-up letters disputing or confirming the original's assertions. They offered a point of entry into a diversifying realm of political news reporting, providing longer explanations and more context than the short, dry paragraphs that appeared in newspapers. And they showed how a central purpose of letter writing, the communication of "news," could continue and expand in print. By pulling some of the visual, material elements of letter writing into the realm of print—the address, the opening "Sir" and closing signature, the approximate length and page layout—letters familiarized the new medium, priming readers to interpret it in terms of the mixed public-private epistolary communities with which they were already acquainted.

Even at the end of the eighteenth century, this intuitive knowledge of epistolarity was still in play. Edmund Burke, for example, relied on the genre when he subtitled his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* a "Letter intended to have been sent to a Gentleman in Paris." Burke noted that his "Reflections had their origin in a correspondence," although the result had "far exceeded the measure of a letter." "However," he continued, "having thrown down his first thoughts in the form of a letter, and indeed, when he sat down to write, having intended it for a private letter, he found it difficult to change the form of address, when his sentiments had grown into a greater extent, and had received another direction."[32] Later in the work he claimed the "freedom of epistolary intercourse" to explain the style of writing.[33] Burke, like the ear-

lier pamphlet writers, relied on readers' implicit understandings of how to read and write letters to frame his treatise, in which he used a "private letter" to criticize the public correspondence of the London-based Revolution Society with the French National Assembly. Over time, the letter pamphlet formed the basis for longer works of politics and news, as individual letters were collected into volumes and then treatises that, like Burke's, continued to have a vestigial epistolary orientation. The letter transferred features already implicit in manuscript epistles, such as the assumptions that letters were a primary source of news, that such news had been vetted, and that information should be tailored to local communities, into the print medium. By initially connecting old and new media, therefore, the bridge genre allows for the development of increasingly divergent texts that take advantage of the changed possibilities the new medium affords. The concept of bridging shows the linked movement of genre and medium: once users are accustomed to these new forms, they are able to experiment and diversify, forging new genres that no longer make active reference to old media. The bridge establishes a groundwork for generic innovation by facilitating media shift.

## Terminology

As this discussion will already have demonstrated, my argument relies on nuanced understandings of a number of concepts that have become central to literary and media studies in recent years. In particular, one of the goals of this work is to clarify the relationship between two terms fundamental to a materially attentive literary analysis: *genre* and *medium*. This book helps to recover a prehistory of these terms, showing how the use of the letter genre across manuscript and print media helped people make sense of changing literary conditions. In my treatment of them, genre and medium are not contrasts corresponding to content and format, respectively; rather, they reinforce and inform one another. Genre is the more capacious term; as Mikhail Bakhtin argues, genres are the "great heroes" of language and literature, "whose 'trends' and 'schools' are but second- or third-rank protagonists."[34] Ralph Cohen notes that genres are defined not in isolation but in relation to one another, and medium—the material form of transmission—is a key element of those categorizations: "When an oral society is replaced by a literate one, the reasons for generic classification undergo change."[35] I define a genre as a category of communication that identifies a cluster of textual characteristics and conventions; in Lisa Gitelman's phrasing, it is "a mode of recognition" that finds "sites and segments of coherence within the discursive field."[36]

Genre enables, structures, and limns reading, writing, and criticism through both descriptive and prescriptive channels, locating a text within its literary-historical context. This does not mean that genre categories are static; they are always expanding and shrinking, always relocating in relation to other genres, always defining themselves against adjacent ones. Genres preemptively offer guides to interpretation and pragmatically class associated conventions, at once providing stability and allowing for modification. No single feature will define a genre, and no text will display all of the features that a genre contains.

A theoretical model of genre does not simply name formal features or stylistic traits but also and more broadly shows how genres work to shape the processes of reading and writing. By calling the letter a genre rather than a related term such as form or mode, I emphasize what it can do rather than attempting an a priori definition of what it is. Gerard Genette distinguishes between genre and mode by noting that the latter is a kind of "enunciation" relating to style and/or meter: "genres are properly literary categories, whereas modes are categories that belong to linguistics. . . . Modes and themes, intersecting, jointly include and determine genres."[37] The linguistic category of mode is an element of genre; so is form, which I do not see as a synonym. Form, while historically contingent, is a property of the text, one related to the arrangement of words on the page or screen, and in this context is a literary category tied to the disciplinary practice of close reading.[38] More broadly, Sandra Macpherson defines "form" as "nothing more—and nothing less—than the shape matter (whether a poem or a tree) takes."[39] Literary form gives material shape to words. Form and genre may be difficult to tease apart because in some cases a genre's most prominent feature is its form, as is almost the case with the letter—Johnson, for example, contended that "a letter has no peculiarity but its form." But he qualified this seemingly definitive statement, noting, "As letters are written on all subjects, in all states of mind, they cannot be properly reduced to settled rules, or described by any single characteristic."[40] The genre of the letter activates practices, norms, codes, and materials without which the "Dear You . . . Sincerely, Me" letter form would be unintelligible, and not all letters follow this form. By moving from form to genre we can therefore see how a variety of formal, textual, and contextual conventions —such as medium, matter, topic, historical situation, geographical location, audience, and method of circulation—are brought together by genre categorizations. This means, as Bakhtin writes, "taking genre not in its formalistic

sense, but as a zone and a field of valorized perception, a mode for representing the world."[41]

Just as "genre" includes both potential and observed features and conventions, "the letter" includes both the literary-aesthetic shape of the salutation-to-subscription letter form and the multitude of epistolary communications, written and printed, that circulated in the long eighteenth century. Seeing the letter as a genre, and especially as a bridge genre, reveals eighteenth-century epistolarity as a strategy for navigating a new media regime, not merely as the absorption of "factual" forms into new "fictions." It shows how print exhibited a far-reaching epistolary orientation and allows us to identify texts that encompass the letter genre rather than simply reproducing the letter form. To take a present-day example, almost all discussions of Ta-Nehisi Coates's National Book Award–winning memoir *Between the World and Me* (2015) recognized the work's connection to James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* (1963) not only in tone and subject matter but also in epistolary framing. The short prefatory essay of Baldwin's book is subtitled "Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation" and opens, "Dear James: I have begun this letter five times and torn it up five times"; meanwhile, Baldwin calls the main section of the book a "Letter from a Region in My Mind" but does not include any epistolary formatting in that 100-page essay.[42] Coates's work starts with the salutation "Son," and is directed throughout to his teenage child, but likewise does not have the visual appearance of a letter.[43] In each case, the appeal to the letter genre serves a purpose: it personalizes what are analytical and pessimistic texts, making an emotional call on the reader that the content often eschews. It also creates a relationship with the past through a nostalgic form, while projecting the book toward the future through the address to a younger generation. Although the works could be classified variously as essays, journalism, memoirs, or polemics, they use the overarching genre of the letter to forge literary bonds.

Focusing on the eighteenth century but drawing such connections to today's changing environment, the present volume introduces a model for the process of genre formation in literary history: new genres arise when new media become available and accessible to a wide readership. The bridge genre constitutes an attempt to overcome a perceived lack in the new medium through an appeal to multimodality. I take "medium" to refer to a work's material qualities and to the physical mechanisms of its creation and circulation; the four basic media with which I will be concerned are the oral, the manu-

script, the printed, and, when discussing contemporary trends, the digital.[44] Medium is a feature of genre, one of the factors that help categorize a text; a standard (but not necessary) characteristic of the newspaper, for example, is that it is printed. A genre is not defined by its medium, but medium conditions generic categories. Genres do not exist in isolation but in systems of interrelated classes,[45] so that it is necessarily the case that some (under particular historical circumstances) will connect and organize others; Genette calls these "archigenres."[46] To return again to Bakhtin, "in each epoch certain speech genres set the tone for the development of literary language."[47] During the eighteenth-century expansion of print, this genre was the letter, which informed and intersected with nearly every kind of writing. The special power of the letter at this moment was that its genre characteristics already integrated manuscript and print media.

While John Guillory has argued that the concept of "medium" was "absent but *wanted*" until the nineteenth century, making it difficult for writers to theorize communication even at a time when many were increasingly interested in doing so, my attention to the letter as a bridge genre reveals the period's methods for understanding and responding to changing media conditions.[48] In the eighteenth century, I argue, the network of what we would now call a "media environment" came to be denominated "the world," an omnipresent phrase in the era's literature. The combination of expanding and more reliable state postal systems, dramatic growth in the quantity of print publications, the spread of literacy, the prevalence of the letter in print, and the facility of correspondence with Europe and the colonies allowed Britons to map the world using a grid of communication that was both literal and imagined. The scope of communications showed them the scope of the world, whether it was the fictional world of a novel, the social world of high society, the news world of a coverage community, or the globalizing world of British colonies. "The world" indicated a discursive zone defined, in large part, by the reach of the mail: those within the postal system were also within the world.[49] Bridge genres are media-world travelers, providing connections across the world of writing. In the postal era, the letter was the most apposite genre for representing the interaction of the individual reader with a new media world.

Authors across a range of genres returned continually to the question of how one knew the world and how one incorporated, analyzed, and communicated that knowledge. John Locke began his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* by noting that his "Treatise . . . has ventured into the World" thanks to his patron's "encouragement, this should appear in the World"; the dedica-

tory letter gave him an opportunity to "testifie to the World, how much I am obliged."[50] A character in Margaret Cavendish's play *Youths Glory, and Deaths Banquet* noted that "speach, flyes away in words . . . when writing, or printing, fixes it to everlasting time, to the publick view of the World."[51] And as late as 1779, Richard Graves noted in the preface to his novel *Columella*, "I begin to think, that in time the world, in a literal sense, will not be able to contain the books that shall be written"—a formulation drawing attention to the nonliteral sense of "the world" as he continued, "The world is capricious and wants variety."[52] This phrase was more than a precursor to what would now be called "the public." When authors used it, they were not referring to an amorphous, anonymous mass, the "imagined community" of the nation.[53] Rather, "the world"—and in particular the use of letters to address "the world"—implied, somewhat paradoxically, that one's audience was within reach: that readers remained part of an epistolary circle, even if it was expanding to a global scale. The prominence of printed letters drew a continuous line between the two extremes of the personal, individual letter and the anonymous, fictional letter directed to the general public; indeed, the bulk of letters lay at the meridian of these poles, occupying, as Blair wrote, "a kind of middle place between the serious and amusing species of Composition."[54] Letters and postal systems were crucial to the construct of "the world" because the local grid of routes and relays could project out as a replica of the worldwide circulation of information, creating an awareness of interconnection. Eighteenth-century writers fused the global with the metonymic when "writing to the world," indicating a delineated communicative realm that they could reach through their texts. With the predominance of printed letters, personal epistolary circles served as an analogue for the expanding media environment.

## Contexts and Methods

This expansive view of the world of letters adds to ongoing scholarly conversations about the letter as a critical early modern communications technology. In recent years, research on epistolary writing and postal history has expanded concepts of the letter beyond the attention to novels that dominated the field in the past. Epistolary studies has moved away from a feminist and/or poststructuralist focus on the letter as a transhistorical site for the development of private, and particularly feminine, subjectivity "and toward meticulous cultural historicization: the epistolary generic contract is always revised in light of changing historical contexts."[55] This process has revealed the widespread significance of the letter in both manuscript and print across

factual and fictional literary traditions. But recent historicist studies of epistolary writing, while acknowledging the range of media in which letters appeared in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, have continued to divide the analysis of manuscript and printed letters into separate realms and to put forward the personal, handwritten letter as the *ur*-letter. By focusing on the meeting points of media history and literary history, I draw from the rich historical descriptions of epistolary writing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries provided by scholars such as Konstantin Dierks, Clare Brant, Susan Whyman, and Lindsay O'Neill. I track the imbricated categories of genre and medium by combining literary analysis with attention to texts' material qualities and to changing technologies of textual production.

In assessing the expansion of print in the long eighteenth century, it should be a priority to examine the medium not in isolation, but always in relationship to the other media with which it was compared and contrasted. We should try not to operate on the assumption of the inevitable triumph of print, but to examine the long period of interaction and overlap that was its necessary precursor. Attending to the reasons that letters were so useful for the processes of genre formation during the era's surge in print publication can help to de-familiarize the results-oriented narrative of the revolutionary rise of print, and for this purpose it is particularly important to consider a range of texts including but extending beyond the printed book. While studies of early modern and eighteenth-century book production, including James Raven's *The Business of Books*, Adrian Johns's *The Nature of the Book*, and Andrew Piper's *Dreaming in Books*, have provided valuable accounts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as periods of transition and fluctuation in manuscript and print publishing, their primary focus on the codex means that they overlook some of the central nonbook genres in which change took place. This volume therefore examines a variety of manuscript and print forms—spending as much time with newspapers, periodicals, pedagogical manuals, and book reviews as with epistolary novels—to comprehend the reach of the letter as a bridge genre in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Likewise, each chapter includes discussion of both scribal and printed texts to offer a holistic picture of textual practices. Large-scale studies of publication and authorship in the long eighteenth century have tended to separate print and manuscript as arenas for investigation, even as some have explored the fluid, multiple nature of the era's media. Harold Love and Margaret Ezell each use the term "publication," now associated with printing, to refer to the creation and distribution of manuscript texts, and Ezell's concept of

"social authorship" highlights the communal, contextual processes that were central to letter writing and manuscript circulation more generally. Their works argue, however, that manuscript eventually was replaced by "print culture," a concept that is often given monolithic force in the eighteenth century. Critical conventional wisdom maintains a separation between scribal and printed texts, which I work to undo. I argue that, as manuscript letters transitioned into print, the widespread and escalating appearance of printed letters reflected back on how people composed and read handwritten epistles. As a bridge genre, the letter was an indispensable form of writing in each medium simultaneously.

This stance offers a framework for multimedia and multigeneric investigation of textual artifacts, one that understands medium of publication as a choice made with reference to many possible alternatives. For consumers, as D. F. McKenzie has argued, media tend to work in complementary, not competitive, ways: "we did not stop speaking when we learned to write, nor writing when we learned to print, nor reading, writing, or printing when we entered the 'electronic age.'"[56] Engaging methodologically with this seemingly obvious, but necessary, observation, each of my chapters brings together archival research into manuscript correspondence, "ephemeral" works found in archives and digital databases, and canonical eighteenth-century authors and books. I treat these all as various epistolary genres, resisting a real/fake distinction between manuscript and printed letters. The invention of handpress printing expanded the range of options for written communication and engendered a variety of texts that in fact required the mixing of script and type. Whether it was through the printed errata sheets that asked readers to manually correct mistakes in a text, the new kinds of "blanks" that offered printed forms to be filled in by hand, the empty spaces in religious and academic works to add Greek and Hebrew lettering or musical notes, or the epistolary and penmanship manuals that promoted written production, the new medium both relied on manuscript conventions and expanded venues for the use of handwriting.[57] Print was one element, albeit a novel and intriguing one, in a complex, shifting media environment whose hierarchies were context dependent.

## Bridges

Identifying the letter as the key bridge genre of the late seventeenth through early nineteenth centuries should also allow us to locate the bridge genres facilitating change in other historical periods, and in particular to better

understand our current moment of transition and transformation. The metaphor of the bridge is a useful one because it would have been legible to readers and writers in the eighteenth century as well as today, and because it can highlight connection or separation, movement or arrival.[58] It places the apparently abstract concept of genre in the physical, constructed world. New digital genres today demonstrate the potential of the bridge genre as a means to conceptualize the parallel processes of genre and media shift. The letter has reemerged with a bridging function: in the form of email or text messaging, it has helped to normalize the global communications revolution in which constant connection is now the assumed state of affairs. Early uses of the Internet, such as listservs, forwarded individual emails to the subscribers of a list, creating hybrid personal-communal documents. Similarly, the development of the blog reiterated many of the stages of the birth of the newspaper, using the genre of the letter as a means to introduce readers to the new form's goals and orientations. While blogs were initially modeled as personal conversations publicly available, with an author or authors writing to a cohort of readers and commenters, many have now become commercialized, relatively top-down venues; personal blogs and commenting forums have declined, and many key stand-alone blogs, such as Bill Simmons's BostonSportsGuy.com or Nate Silver's FiveThirtyEight.com, have become major media brands. The epistolary voice of the Web 2.0 environment, in which social networking is the key component, is evident in the extent to which quotidian activities are broadcast to self-selecting groups of readers on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

But the letter is not the only bridge genre central to the digital environment. Genres such as the audiovisual clip or the GIF, which pull the older media of video and music into the digital medium, also perform bridging. A unique contemporary illustration appears in emojis, the digital pictographs that represent a desire to visualize embodied emotion and physical objects in the digital realm and that are, according to *New York Magazine*, "trying to topple the millennia-long reign of words"; emojis are "well suited to the kind of emotional heavy lifting for which written language is often clumsy or awkward or problematic, especially when it's relayed on tiny screens, tapped out in real time, using our thumbs."[59] The emoji bridges the world and the screen. Examining the bridge genres at work connecting oral, written, printed, and digital media today can help to resituate the narrative of revolution and disruption endemic to discussions of the digital and to show how, on the level of day-to-day practice, users experience media as continuous and interconnected rather than as competitive and superseding.

However, I am not arguing for a straight line of development from the eighteenth-century letter to the twenty-first-century blogosphere; instead, I note that the model of the bridge genre provides important insights into the intricate media negotiations involved in the incorporation of both print and digital media into everyday authorial and readerly practices. The majority of this book focuses on eighteenth-century British texts for several historical and disciplinary reasons. England and the United Kingdom provide an important case study of the relationship between letters and print because the network of print circulation was often identical to that of the postal system. Print traveled through the mail to reach provincial booksellers and readers outside of London, and it moved in the same mailbags as personal letters. Just as the charge for a letter was calculated based on how far it traveled from its origin via the main post office in London, so was a piece of print defined in many ways by its distance from a center of production; until 1695, the Licensing Act officially restricted printing presses to London and the university towns. The expansion and normalization of this networked relationship of center to periphery meant that the "world" of London society and popular culture, a common trope since at least the Elizabethan period, now had a distinct material basis in the circulation of manuscript and print along postal networks. The postal system was increasingly able to stand in for "the world" because readers and writers saw a letter entering it as potentially connected to London, England, Scotland, Europe, and the incipient British Empire (figure I.2). The post constituted a "new technology of communications . . . and also a tendon in the connective tissue between nation and wider world."[60]

*Writing to the World* therefore elucidates the relationship between the metonymic "world" and eighteenth-century Britain's globalizing world, newly accessible through the writing that circulated to and from the continent and colonies. While my emphasis is on works produced in London and England, examining letters' genre networks will reveal the limitations of such national categories in this time period. For example, the first English newspapers did not present themselves as domestically oriented. Instead, they reprinted letters from cities across the European continent, the West and East Indies, and the American colonies; in their turn, European, provincial, and colonial newspapers featured a steady stream of news datelined "London." Likewise, personal and professional correspondence networks traversed borders with the spread of postal routes and packet ships, and novelists represented a flow of letters traveling to and from abroad (witness Samuel Richardson's division of the characters in *Sir Charles Grandison* into "Men," "Women," and "Italians").

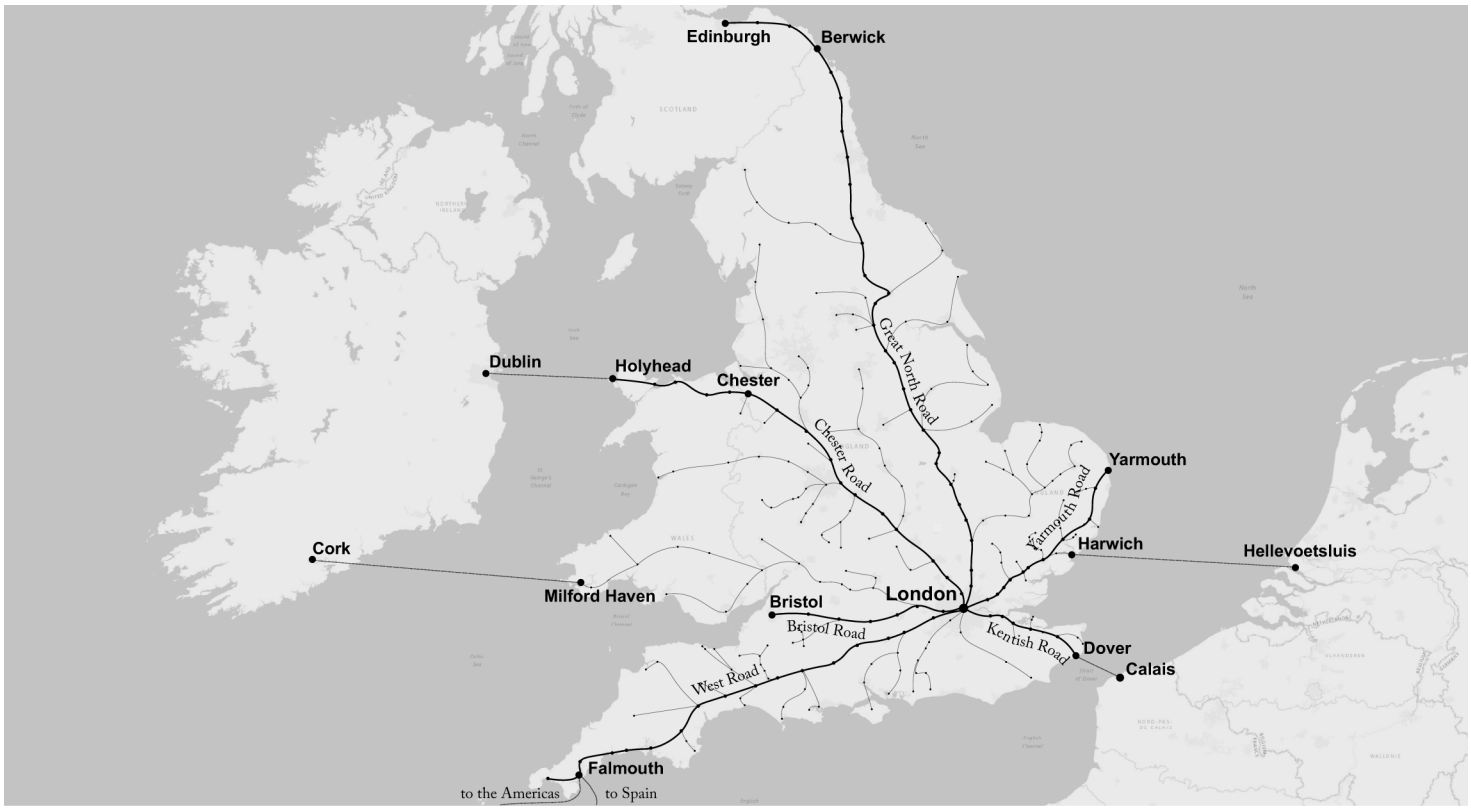



*Figure I.2.* Map of the six post roads, their by-roads, and their connections to foreign ports as the system was laid out in the late seventeenth century. The roads operated on a hub-and-spoke basis, in which all mail circulated in and out of London, until at least the mid-eighteenth century. Source: John Ogilby, *Britannia, Volume the First* (London: 1675), n. pag. Map created by the author.

Just as a focus on genre can upset traditional period boundaries, so too may it unsettle national literary distinctions. While the early, centralized development of the British postal system therefore provides a lens for my investigation of the letter as a bridge genre, the very hub-and-spoke nature of that system means that letters, newspapers, and books from across the globe will find their way into the discussion.

The British post circulated in this way around the capital of London, "a vortex at the heart of epistolary space to which all letters and the thoughts of all their writers and readers gravitated."[61] Most letters either originated in London or had to be processed in the city in order to arrive at their destinations in the country. In adopting the figure of the bridge, then, I have a particular eighteenth-century version in mind: old London Bridge, the arched structure draped with multistory shops and houses at the heart of literary London. In 1722, Nathan Bailey called it "the most stately Bridge in the whole World," while French traveler Henri Misson sarcastically repeated this assessment, noting, "The *English* praise this Work above any Thing that is to be seen in the World."[62] The crowded bridge provided a narrow passageway—almost a tunnel where overhanging eaves blocked the sky—in which pedestrians and drivers encountered an evocative parade of signboards: the Three Bibles, the Red Lion, the Golden Bible, the Black Boy, the Sun and Bible, the Looking Glass.[63] These were not public houses—of which the bridge also featured several—but, rather, printing houses. As the title pages of many books and pamphlets attest, London Bridge was a hub of the early modern and eighteenth-century book trade.[64] The urban landmark was as much a destination as a conduit: as German traveler Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach wrote in 1710, "we went to *London bridge* and were nearly half-way across before we found out that we were on the bridge, as there are high houses with shops below on either side."[65] The design meant that there was an almost imperceptible transition from bank to bridge and back again.

London Bridge stands out both as an institution of actual practices of writing, printing, and bookselling and as a symbol of the written world for early modern readers and writers. The bridge genres that spanned the literary landscape were not straightforward passages from manuscript to print culture. In fact, they may have helped to clarify and separate the two "landmasses" as the media were newly defined in opposition to one another. Michael McKeon has argued that the Enlightenment saw a transition from a tacit to explicit epistemology in which categories such as public and private, or masculine and feminine, were redefined as binary opposites rather than parts of a whole.[66] In a

similar way, manuscript and print emerged as distinct concepts out of a previously continuous realm of publication, and genre categories also became increasingly outlined against one another—fact versus fiction, newspaper versus novel. This process occurred in part via the bridge genre of the letter, which drew attention to the interaction between old and new media. As Harold Love writes, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries "script values were transferred into the medium of print, creating productions whose rationale was to question the certainties of print logic even as these were being invoked."[67] Nowhere was this more the case than in the multimedia genre of the letter.

Therefore, while the chronological structure of this book, and the concept of the bridge genre itself, may imply a developmental narrative, each of my chapters focuses on moments when the relationship between manuscript and printed letters was interdependent or uneven: when "the future was conceivable as holding multifarious possibilities of technical and cultural solutions for constructing media worlds."[68] Such a method can begin to display the steps of diachronic genre change, revealing the bridges that transported readers from the relatively circumscribed world of manuscript news circulation to an expanding, even global, print marketplace, and from an undifferentiated array of epistolary communication to a more stratified interaction between content producers and content consumers. Just as the gradual transition across London Bridge linked city and world, bridge genres performed crucial functions in allowing authors, printers, and readers to transition between media. Spanning manuscript and print conventions for the production, circulation, and reception of texts, they served as the building blocks of media shift. Letters showed readers how to approach and interact with new kinds of print; in the process, as I will show, the letter intersected with the modern genres—the newspaper, the periodical, the biography, and the novel—whose novelty characterized the literature of the long eighteenth century.

# Circulating News

## Letters in Manuscript and Print, 1665–1695

Henry Muddiman is best remembered today as the founding editor of the *London Gazette*, the publication that scholars recognize as the first British newspaper.[1] While Muddiman ran the *Gazette* for less than six months, from late 1665 to February 1666, his influence on it, and on the shape of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century newswriting to come, was profound. His newsgathering techniques, which involved assembling short, discrete items out of personal letters and foreign newspapers, established protocols for the *Gazette*, the only English newspaper until late 1678,[2] as well as for the imitators that proliferated later in the century. These early newspapers were essentially series of epistles, featuring columns of communications from official "correspondents," amateur writers, and foreign editors. There was little in-person or local reporting; London papers translated and reprinted items from continental newssheets and letters, and country towns received London news. Short paragraphs of information would be excerpted from incoming sources and reprinted next to datelines indicating their location of origin. An improving state postal system circulated news to and from writers and readers, who began to imagine themselves to be connected by chains of communication. The letter provided a model for the transmission of news within and between metropolitan and provincial reading communities: it bridged written and printed media and brought readers into a new world of printed news.

For these reasons, contemporaries did not see Muddiman primarily as a newspaperman or print-culture figure—and not only because such categories did not yet exist. Muddiman spent his career transitioning between manuscript and print modes of textual production and publication. He was an ideal candidate for the editorship of the *Gazette* because he had written and issued a popular manuscript newsletter—a professionally produced, handwritten news sheet—for nearly a decade, which he sent to "about two hundred foreign and domestic correspondents, who were to return news from their areas for his next edition."[3] In addition, between 1659 and 1666 he printed four different newsbooks, with items culled from his own and others' newsletters.[4]

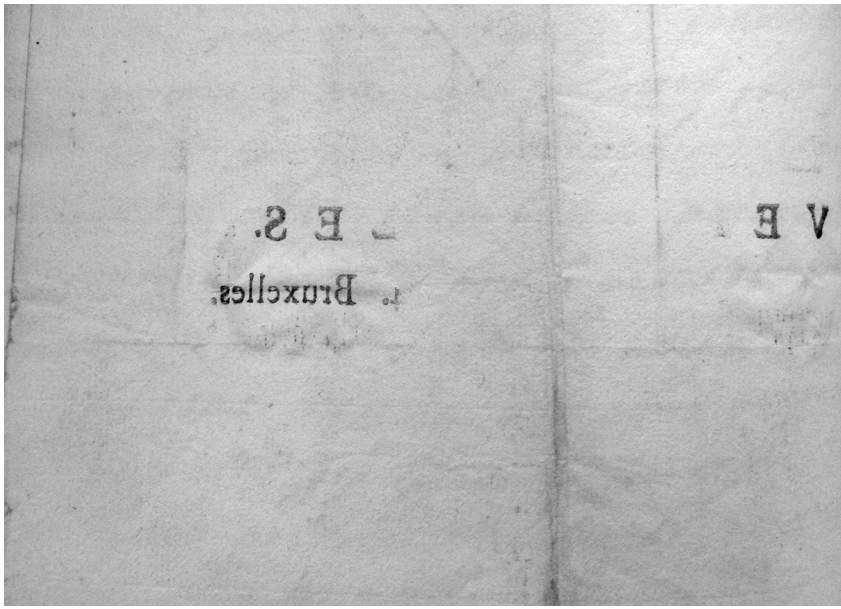



*Figure 1.1.* Mirror-image traces of type left on the back of a 1670s manuscript newsletter sheet, apparently from where the letter's seal had been applied. News-letters addressed to the Duke of Ormond, MS. Carte 222, fol. 337$^{v}$, The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford.

He was the country's official journalist—a status that applied to both his manuscript and print editorships—on and off during the 1660s, and his position as an employee of the Secretary of State gave him franking privileges with which he could mail his newsletters for free.[5] As editor of the *Gazette*, Muddiman continued to enclose his manuscript newsletter with the printed newspaper, a practice that is evident today in the reverse-image impressions of inky type that remain on handwritten newsletter sheets (figure 1.1). The format of the *Gazette*, a folio half-sheet, was exactly that of the written newsletters, so that the newspaper could be more easily folded up and mailed than could earlier newsbooks and pamphlets.[6]

After he was fired from the *Gazette*,[7] Muddiman went right back to his newsletters, for which he charged £5, more than double the yearly rate for the newspaper.[8] In 1667, a subordinate wrote to Under-Secretary of State Joseph Williamson, whose office produced the *Gazette*, that Muddiman's letters were in fierce competition with both the newspaper and the government's own man-

uscript newsletter: "Mr. Muddiman gives far larger accounts to his correspondents than you do, which makes them much desired."[9] While Muddiman was far from the only newsletter writer in the late seventeenth century, his status as the "king's journalist" gave him an authority that even the *Gazette*, whose banner headline included the phrase "Published by Authority," may have lacked in the assessment of early news consumers. The epistemological authority of the early newspaper or newsletter lay in the network of correspondents its editor could muster.

Muddiman's journalistic career illustrates two central facts about the media environment, and particularly about the developing news marketplace, of the late seventeenth century: first, that it relied on letters and the postal system in a variety of fundamental and complex ways, and, second, that it did not draw clear distinctions between manuscript and print as forms of news transmission. Instead, written and printed media worked in tandem and in addition to the traditional oral circulation of news, offering users a range of communicative options rather than replacing or overriding each other. While the *Gazette* has generally been understood as a censored government publication whose purpose was to temper the freer circulation of news that had developed in the Civil War period,[10] it set a pattern for news reporting that lasted well past the end of pre-publication censorship and into the eighteenth century. The burgeoning news industry would operate on the basis of the existing system of postal exchange. Even though, as David Randall notes, "scholars of print culture have looked at such [news] ephemera as one of the categories of 'proof-texts' for Elizabeth Eisenstein's theory of a 'print revolution' in early modern Europe," early printed news remained enmeshed with manuscript transmission.[11] Newspaper printers simply set their correspondence in type, referring constantly to "Letters received" as the source of news or excusing a lack of news due to the fact that "the foreign posts were not yet come in." Both newspapers and newsletters traveled via the post to reach readers. The basic technique of reportage was aggregation from written sources that arrived in the mail.

The prominence of epistolary newsgathering and formatting in the first newspapers begins to reveal the contemporary status of the letter as a bridge genre connecting manuscript and print media. Seventeenth-century letters confound many of our distinctions between private and public, domestic and commercial, feminine and masculine, and fictional and factual documents. Indeed, such dichotomies are largely anachronistic to this period, and one of the ways in which they began to emerge was through extensive discussion of

the role of letters in news communications. While scholars such as Lennard Davis and J. Paul Hunter have highlighted the newspaper in their influential accounts of the kinds of prose narrative that set the stage for the emergence of the novel, I do not focus here on the newspaper as retrospectively important for its position within the epistemologically ambivalent field Davis calls the "news/novels discourse" or for its contributions to the narrative procedures that encompass Ian Watt's "formal realism."[12] Instead, I see it in its own right as a pivotal eighteenth-century generic achievement, and show how its development via the bridge genre of the letter had longstanding consequences for understandings of the news and of the purpose of the news media. Although letters started to appear as fictional devices at this time, they also, and perhaps more commonly, were associated with the transmission of political, scientific, and commercial news. Many letters were taken from personal correspondence and inserted into print, with or without their authors' prior knowledge, while at other times imaginary letters were attributed to actual people, pseudonyms were used, or the correspondents operated as allegorical figures; the "gentleman in town" writing to his "friend in the country" was a constant trope. From one sentence to the next letters in manuscript and print, or combinations of the two, pivoted from local gossip, to personal feelings, to discussions of foreign war and London entertainment. The letter built a bridge from existing manuscript genres to both a new scale of handwritten communication and a new medium, print, for dealing with text on an everyday basis.

This chapter will describe the seventeenth-century conventions of personal letters that set the stage for the letter to become more prominent as a printed news genre in the 1660s. It will go on to discuss the emergence of the newspaper as a fundamentally epistolary document, one that reworked existing manuscript conventions to establish long-term standards for journalism. The chapter ends just before the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, an event that led to the rapid proliferation of presses and newspapers outside of London and Oxford and had a transformative impact on the world of British print publication. In this period, at the outset of the "postal era," the letter genre exhibited a set of features—flexibility in length and content, a mixed public-private nature, and an authenticating function, among others—that proved valuable to writers and readers as they became more familiar with news in manuscript and print, and users made little distinction between the kinds of information they encountered in each medium. Letters were beneficial to both consumers and producers because they were common, protean, and versatile. As an increasingly literate population came to experience the world through

writing, the letter provided a model for how communication spanning the public-private spectrum could occur.

In 1697, bookseller Samuel Briscoe issued a collection of printed epistles that, in its copiousness and multiplicity, amply illustrates the difficulty of drawing clear distinctions in the early modern world of letters. The text, titled *Familiar Letters: Written by the Right Honourable John late Earl of Rochester, and several other Persons of Honour and Quality*, is neither a letter-writing manual nor a work of epistolary fiction. Instead, it purports to contain copies of letters from Rochester and other well-known political, literary, and social figures; some of the letters are, indeed, original to Rochester, while others are imaginative.[13] The letters, both within themselves and from one entry to the next, run the gamut of epistolary content, from ministerial affairs to orders for wine, love letters to book reviews, high-society gossip to political treatises. They also blur easy fact-fiction divides; while Briscoe writes in his preface that he has preserved the "Originals," many of the letters have no identified author or are signed with romance pseudonyms such as "Orinda" and "Ziphares"; the love letters in particular hew to the conventions of printed romances and letter manuals. Several of the letters advertise fictionality, as for example those that are "written" by a character other than the designated author, while others stress facticity with initials and dashes in the place of proper names and dates. Most of the content, however, falls somewhere in between: although Briscoe, who published more than a dozen letter collections in the 1680s and '90s, claims "Reality and Authentickness," it is difficult to ascertain the degree to which the letters have been embellished, abridged, or censored.[14]

The text also plays with questions of publicity and privacy, and implies that readers did not expect letters to adhere to a personal, domestic realm in content, tone, or arena of circulation. Although Briscoe writes that he has encountered "an Objection against publishing things of this Nature, That, if they are written as they ought to be, they shou'd never be made publick,"[15] some of the letters appear to have always been intended for print publication. A letter from Algernon Sidney written during his exile in France is titled a "Letter against Bribery, and Arbitrary Government. Written to his FRIENDS, in Answer to Theirs, perswading his Return to *ENGLAND*,"[16] indicating an intent to address an audience on political themes. Indeed, Briscoe introduces the concern about the supposedly private content of the letters to reassure his readers that they will not find the work incomprehensible—not to argue against reading others' correspondence. As he writes, "I hope this Collection will disarm that Objection; for tho' the Reader may not understand every par-

ticular Passage, yet there are other things in them that will make him sufficient Amends."[17] Briscoe is not concerned about violating norms of privacy regarding individual letters and makes no apology for offering these texts as sources of both entertainment and instruction. This voyeuristic appeal—Briscoe sells his "curious" readers the ability to see into the intimate, daily activities of the notorious rake Rochester—was apparently successful: the bookseller published two subsequent volumes of letters, and each volume went through multiple editions.

Letter collections such as Briscoe's became standard in the seventeenth century, and I locate the first takeoff in printed letters in the 1640s, with the early journalistic newsbooks, rather than in the 1740s, as many novel-focused critics have done.[18] But it was after the Restoration, when a reestablished printing industry combined with widespread interest in home and foreign news during a tumultuous political period, that the pace of change began to accelerate. In 1665, two seminal texts in the history of printing appeared almost simultaneously: the *Gazette*, which would come to be recognized as the first serial newspaper, and *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, which we now know as the first scientific journal; both publications introduced letters as forms of factual eyewitness testimony.[19] The Restoration newspaper replaced earlier, intermittent sources such as newsbooks and corantos with serial and periodical publications that continued under the same title for extended periods of time. Likewise, the authors of the *Philosophical Transactions* envisioned themselves as participating in an ongoing, gradually unfolding publication that constantly sought response and input. The bridge genre of the letter allowed each text to take shape, as the editors assembled personal letters they received into a marketable document that continued to address a relatively circumscribed reading community. They relied on readers' existing associations with letters to present their new offerings as reliable and factual. In each case, as this chapter will show, the manuscript letter allowed what critics have viewed as a quintessentially "print culture" genre to come into being.

## Intimate Conversations and International News: Early Modern Letter Writing

For the present-day reader, one of the most striking elements of early modern letters is their epistolary meta-commentary: writers referred constantly to the act of writing and receiving letters, excusing poor penmanship and paper quality, describing incoming and outgoing correspondence, and dating their letters to locate them in sequence. Any letter, part of an ongoing series of

correspondence, gestured toward a larger written world that was establishing itself and expanding in the late Stuart period. The consolidation of an official postal system allowed the letter, always a prominent genre from antiquity through the medieval period, to become a powerful literary force that could penetrate further into English life. One of the few things that Oliver Cromwell and Charles II may have agreed upon was the importance of a state post to the functioning of government; in 1657, Parliament passed the first legislative act regulating a postal service, a move that the crown repeated in 1660 with legislation that became known as the Post Office Charter.[20] These acts opened to the populace, which had relied largely on private messengers, a system that had been restricted to government agents.[21] This was a crucial step at the dawn of the postal era. As Konstantin Dierks writes, "This amounted less to a technical achievement and more to a conceptual leap: simply for the government to conceive of the necessity for an integrated public service because private arrangements suddenly seemed incommensurate to the task."[22] The creation of postal networks, and of the newspapers that would circulate along them, allowed people at many levels of society to begin to see themselves as connected by networks of writing. They entered "the world" by writing to it, and they received news about it, again, in writing.

Before the mid-sixteenth century, epistolary writing was a branch of the art of rhetoric, "which educated men used to persuade and move others in predetermined ways."[23] The *ars dictaminis* adapted classical rhetorical techniques to letter writing, and in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance became a central form by which scholars circulated ideas and held debates.[24] These letters tended to be short and to adhere to a five-part structure consisting of *salutatio*, *exordium* or *captatio benevolentiae* (both implying the securing of the audience's goodwill), *narratio*, *petitio*, and *conclusio*.[25] This form focused on official letters from superiors to subordinates and vice versa, a dynamic that made each letter one of either injunction or supplication.[26] By the mid-fifteenth century, for merchants and other middle-class letter writers, or the early sixteenth century, for the more formally educated, a vernacular style of English letter writing replaced the *ars dictaminis*, although formulas and stock phrases would remain elements of governmental, legal, clerical, and business letters and forms.[27] Erasmus's 1534 work *De conscribendis epistolis* marked an influential turning point in which letters were redefined not as formal legal documents but as "intimate conversations between friends."[28] This move introduced a number of the terms that would be associated with letter writing throughout the eighteenth century—conversation, intimacy, authenticity—in a man-

ner that focused not on the individual writer's development of his or her subjectivity but rather on the epistolary bonds forged between people and communities.[29] However, as James Daybell and Andrew Gordon argue, the Erasmian humanist letter ignores the materiality of the letter as an object; they call for attention to the "social materiality of letter writing" comprising the physical features of letters in addition to the different norms and contexts of writing and practices of transmission and delivery.[30] The letter's complex generic history demonstrates the fallacy in treating it as a natural, transparent form of writing: rather, as Diana Barnes argues, "it is a rhetorical art founded in classical traditions, systematised by medieval scholars, refashioned and popularised by the printed letters and manuals of humanists, and adapted to English mores."[31]

It was the establishment and gradual consolidation of a state postal system, beginning in the 1650s and '60s and continuing into the eighteenth century, that enabled the expansion of a "familiar," quotidian style of letter writing to readers and writers across England. In the first half of the seventeenth century the slowness and unreliability of the mail was "a normal circumstance, not yet perceived as a problem," but after the Restoration there emerged a perceived need for better postal networks.[32] While the British system appeared at roughly the same time as other European ones, its rapid expansion and centralization made it a model across the continent.[33] And importantly, the development of the British post not only drew writers into new networks of interconnection but also oriented those networks around one central hub: London. The national post office was located in London and all post roads radiated out from the capital; almost all letters passed through the main letter office, and postage was calculated based on the distance the letter traveled first into and then out of London, a system that remained in place until the Victorian period. The six post roads—the West Road, the Kentish Road, the Yarmouth Road, the Great North Road, the Chester Road, and the Bristol Road—"were like the spokes of a great wheel . . . radiating from the center"[34] (see figure I.2). Within London, meanwhile, there were messenger services, and in 1680 a penny post was established that offered up to a dozen daily deliveries.[35]

An individual letter thus connected the writer to "the world" of global media connections via the central postal hub of London. This epistolary world first rose to prominence as means of binding together written communities in the early-modern Republic of Letters, which united scholars across Europe through relationships of exchange, civility, and politeness. As Anne Goldgar, Dena Good-

man, and Robert Darnton have documented, the Republic of Letters was an epistolary community that theorized, constituted, and expanded itself through networks of reciprocal correspondence. These networks emerged out of the conversation-based Parisian salons or London polite society and produced manuscript documents that often found their way into print. The Republic, whose elite members had access to personal postal transmission, can be seen as a microcosm of and forerunner to the media world that would emerge with the establishment of state postal systems. Participants referred to their epistolary community as "the world" or *le monde*: "a phrase that recurs with the regularity of a leitmotif."[36] Before the seventeenth century, learning had been separate from "the world," cloistered in universities or religious institutions; the Republic of Letters brought the two together. What changed in the postal era were the scope and scale of interaction. "The world" expanded with the communications systems on which it relied; its range continually extended through further correspondence and the inclusion of correspondence in new publications.[37] The trope of "the world" began to refer less to the circumscribed sphere of elite society and more to the media sphere into which any letter could be injected.

The era also saw a takeoff in published letter-writing manuals, which first appeared in French and English in the mid-sixteenth century but, in the seventeenth, began to address a wider, more middling-sort audience.[38] These books combined instruction with dozens of sample letters, and they tended to assume a baseline ability to write but a lack of more formal education, which at the time would have included extensive training in classical letter writing. A manual from as early as 1615 titled *A President [Precedent] for Young Pen-Men; or, The Letter-Writer*, demonstrates this leveling tendency; its subtitle describes the work as "most necessary for the instruction of those that can write, but have not the Gifte of enditing."[39] While earlier epistolary guides focused on etiquette for writing to monarchs and aristocrats, educating the reader in social hierarchy as much as in writing skill,[40] this text describes the network of friendship and kinship that surrounds the writer. The sample letters include those between fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, nephews and uncles, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, men and their "coy mistresses," and many different groups of friends. Across these apparently heterogeneous categories runs a thread of continuity: the responsibilities that correspondence entails upon each party. The text's first sample letter establishes this relationship of obligation; a "Letter of Request for a kindnesse," it assumes a response in writing and action on the part of the recipient. And the book

itself enters into this cycle of reciprocity, as it opens with a letter "To the Reader," noting that the work is put "out into the world to the censure of all," as well as a dedicatory epistle "To the Right Worshipfull, and my most worthy esteemeed [*sic*] *Kinsman* Anthony Hobart, of Hales Hall in the County of Norffolke, Esquire"—a dedication that even includes the recipient's address.[41] This early manual imagines for its readers/users a scene of continuous epistolary intercourse that fans out across a web of familial, personal, business, and social relationships.

Although it is true that, in Roger Chartier's words, an "essential question raised by letter-writing manuals is that of their usefulness,"[42] one function the manuals served was to establish a quotidian ideal of the letter; while the best and most educated writers could flout the rules and disdain the use of formulas, for the newly or barely literate the guides provided a standard to which to aspire. Both epistolary manuals and the written letters of the period bear out the contention that the letter was neither specifically a private nor feminine genre at the time. The explicit instruction and model letters of the manuals characterize epistolary writing as primarily outward facing and concerned firstly with the links between the author and his (these texts tend to presume a male correspondent) social network—a network made visible through the writing of letters. These letters share a number of generic features. They tend to be highly metadiscursive or phatic, referring constantly to other letters, the writing process, and the establishment of a secure channel. They are, importantly, material texts whose physical conditions are as essential to their signification as the words on the page.[43] They cross written and printed media, and they draw personal, social, political, and business information all under the general category of "news," whose communication they figure as the fundamental purpose of the letter. They operate on the assumption of directed address—that the "news" in the letter is written *from* a known author *to* a particular reading community—and they represent the letter as an element in a system of reciprocal exchange that is cyclical and ongoing. And in dealing with this "news," they move quickly and lightly from topic to topic in a manner that tends to favor quantity over quality of information. Significantly, these characteristics are also ubiquitous in the handwritten personal letters of the period. Letter-writing manuals offered models not primarily of individual letters but of a written world of interpenetrating epistolary connections.

A variety of personal letters of the late seventeenth century, of which some have been anthologized and others remain accessible only in archives, testify to how writers understood their letters as units in an expansive communica-

tions system and as circulating elements that helped to constitute the written "world." The letters of Dorothy Osborne to Sir William Temple dwelled at length on the ways in which her writing from the country was able to connect her to the world of her diplomat suitor even as she maintained a physical separation from him.[44] Osborne and Temple were forbidden marriage for both economic and political reasons—her family was Royalist, his Parliamentarian—and their six-year courtship during the 1650s proceeded largely by mail. In her letters, Osborne often described the access to the world the emerging communications systems offered her; as she wrote to Temple in 1653, "That you may not imagine wee are quite out of the world heer, and soe bee frighted from comeing, I can assure you wee are seldome without news."[45] Osborne and Temple exchanged books of romance, history, and poetry along with their notes, and they interpreted the material evidence of the letters as commentary on the status of their relationship. Osborne wrote in 1653 that their "strangly scribled" letters were proof of intimacy: "Sure I shall not finde fault with you writeing in hast for any thing but the shortnesse of your letter, and twould bee very unjust in mee to tye you to a Ceremony that I doe not observe my selfe, noe, for god sake, let there bee noe such thing between us."[46] She admonished Temple for sending short letters or for missing a post day, and noted his similar complaints in her responses; the length of the letters became a barometer for feeling. As she wrote, "O if you do not send mee long letters then you are the Cruellest person that can bee. If you love mee you will."[47]

Osborne's own "long letters" allowed her to display the developing epistolary method of "writing to the moment," a style that was made possible by the rapid and reliable transmission of letters whether by private messenger or state post. While literary critics associate "writing to the moment" with the novels of Samuel Richardson—who coined the phrase and claimed that he had invented the form—letters like Osborne's show that it had a significant generic history by the time Richardson began publishing novels in the 1740s.[48] "Writing to the moment" was one of the features that could easily transition into print via the bridge genre of the letter. The technique depicted the act of letter writing as unfolding simultaneously with the events being narrated in the letter. Osborne's style made writing itself the focus of her life as letters proceeded in real time: "This is a strange confused [letter] I believe, for I have bin call'd away twenty times since I sate downe to write it"; "Ile swear my Eys are soe heavy that I hardly see what or how I write . . . and yet on my conscience I shall goe on with it"; "Just now I was interupted too and call'd away."[49] In this way, she allowed Temple not only to receive her words and "voice," but

also to look over her shoulder as she composed the letter. But as she drew attention to the compositional process, she reflected the writing-manual advice that letters should resemble conversation, a metaphor that encouraged spontaneity and the illusion of physical presence; as she wrote, "All Letters mee thinks should be free and Easy as ones discourse, not studdyed, as an Oration, nor made up of hard words like a Charme."[50] For Osborne, letter writing was not only a duty but also an integral, structuring element of everyday life.

While we might expect that this supposedly forbidden correspondence would remain clandestine, Osborne made clear that she did not consider or expect her and Temple's letters to remain as only personal, private documents. One of her epistles was written on the back of another from her brother—allowing her to take advantage of unused paper and to "forward" Temple the information contained therein—and, while at times she took pains to contact Temple by private messenger, she often sent letters along with her family's post or used friends and servants as intermediaries. She located her correspondence with Temple as one branch of an expansive epistolary network that included their relatives and friends, public newspapers, and local gossip; letters and books were sent between the two correspondents but then frequently enclosed in mail to others or read aloud to confidantes. Although Osborne contrasted the intimacy of the epistolary relationship to the unfettered information of "the world"—writing, for example, "This is the worlde would you and I were out on't, for sure wee were not made to live in it"[51]—she also noted how the act of writing drew them into a larger sphere. Osborne's references to what she called "the talk of the world" progressed along with the letters and her relationship with Temple, as she grew aware that—just as her own letters were filled with gossip about acquaintances' romantic affairs—their courtship had become the subject of others' oral and written communications. She wrote that she had received letters from friends and relatives detailing her own marriage prospects, including one from someone who "sent it mee as news she had out of Ireland," and repeatedly wondered how these informants had received their "intelligence" or "informations."[52] While Osborne would have liked to escape from the world into an exclusive correspondence with Temple, she knew that the fact of corresponding necessarily made her a part of the social sphere. Indeed, the extensive correspondence only ended with their marriage, an act that removed the need to communicate via "the world."

Osborne's letters to Temple entailed, in her description, both positive and negative access to "the world": she was able to maintain a relationship with her suitor across time and space but also found her personal concerns dragged

into a scene of circulating information. Reversing the direction of the correspondence, a series of letters, now housed at the Morgan Library, between John Locke and his friend and estate steward, Cornelius Lyde, also demonstrates how epistolary standards assumed an ongoing interaction that transmitted information from city to country and back again. In every letter in the sequence, which spanned the 1690s, Locke asked Lyde to perform some business function for him and offered his "services" in return; such services engaged both parties in a mutual relationship that had both material and symbolic expression in the exchange of letters. Locke, located in London for most of the correspondence, directed Lyde as to the collection of rents and selection of tenants for Locke's property, and at the same time offered Lyde updates on Parliamentary activity to solve the problem of clipped money (a fact that has made the correspondence of interest for historians of economics). As Locke wrote in March 1696, "After having writ to you soe lately as I have once before in this month I should not trouble you soe soon again were it not to give you this account of what the house of Commons have done about the money, which perhaps may be of use to you in your own affairs as well as mine."[53] At the same time as he provided this information as a type of exchange for Lyde's help, Locke also served as a London connection for Lyde and his son; in October 1695 Locke wrote, "I am very glad I was not out of town when there was any opportunity to doe you any service there."[54] The regularity and formulaic nature of Locke's letters, in which Locke would first acknowledge receipt of a letter from Lyde, ask Lyde to fulfill some part of his stewardship, and then offer his own services in London in exchange, provide evidence of both men's confidence in a stable, consistent postal connection.

The series also shows the extent to which the processes of writing and sending letters morphed into their content. Letters were, importantly, material texts that could go astray or be intercepted, and senders worried about epistles' ability to reach their final destinations. The author's hand composing the letter overlapped with his or her "hand"—that is, handwriting—in a manner that allowed each letter to represent the physical presence and absent voice of the writer; a "good hand" was a symbol of the care and time taken in composing a letter and, by extension, of the character of the author and importance of the epistolary relationship. Locke's letters display this metadiscursive quality: each included at least brief references to other letters sent and received, and many offered extensive commentary on the ongoing correspondence. A long letter of February 1696 began by noting Locke's concern about potential missing letters: "I writ to you in Michaelmas term in answer

to one I received then from you. . . . Hearing no thing of your receit of which letter I mention it here to you again that you may not think me carelesse or negligent of anything which you are concerned in." Locke went on, "I have now before me yours of the 1st instant," and described a negotiation over the tenancy of one of his cottages. He included extracts of letters he had received on this subject, underlining his quotations from other epistles. He enclosed a separate letter to give Lyde power of attorney and, after finishing his discussion of the tenancy issue, offered more information about the "bad" or clipped money. Locke identified this section as more "private" than the foregoing, noting, "This I say only to you as my private opinion, which I would not have you mention again as from me, but that you may make what use of it you shall think fit in your own affairs."[55] Locke viewed both the sending of letters and the information or services detailed within those letters as acts that were links in a chain of mutual obligation.

One of the key features of the genre of the letter, therefore, was the idea that it served not only as a carrier of content but also as a means of connection, bridging rural and urban scenes. John Dryden's letters to his cousin, Elizabeth Steward, modeled the same notion that the physical object of the letter, in addition to its internal news or information, served as a kind of commodity that could be exchanged for services. Steward frequently sent packages of food from her country home to Dryden, prompting him to write in December 1698, "All my Letters being nothing but Acknowledgments of Your favours to me, 'tis no wonder if they are all alike: for they can but Express the same thing; I being eternally the Receiver; and you the Giver."[56] To remedy the situation, Dryden sent his cousin news of the London world, detailing royal proclamations, new plays, items from the *Gazette*, and updates on his own books. He also promised to enclose additional materials, writing, "When any papers of verses in Manuscript which are worth your reading come abroad, you shall be sure of them."[57] Dryden repeatedly criticized himself for sending only political and not personal news—in November 1699 he wrote, "You may see I am dull by my writing news" and, two weeks later, "Let this Letter stand for nothing, because it has nothing but newes in it"[58]—indicating that his ideal letter would combine both public and private topics. But he also reflected on the physical conditions of the proper letter, chiefly at times when his own fell short; in February 1698 he apologized for the brevity of a letter, while a month later he noted in a postscript that he had folded his paper incorrectly: "You may see I was in hast, by writing on the wrong side of the Paper."[59] At other times, he commented on his poor handwriting and said that he had not taken

the time to transcribe a better copy. In order to count as a fair bargain, Dryden pointed out, the letter must live up to both material and textual standards for its composition and circulation.

While these series of correspondence from Locke, Dryden, and Osborne are not the letters of "average" people, they are these writers' average, everyday letters, which they used not to expound philosophical treatises or circulate poetry but to exchanges news on a variety of topics. Despite their apparently dissimilar content, they demonstrate the functions that writers and readers expected letters to perform in the late seventeenth century: to establish reciprocal, ongoing networks of exchange and to give sender and recipient access to an expanding media environment that was in part constituted through the interchange of letters. Both Locke and Dryden were located in London for most of these sequences of correspondence, and one role they explicitly fulfilled was to provide social, entertainment, and political updates to friends and family in the country. Their letters snared these country locations into the web of postal routes radiating out of town. They described this overlapping written/social network as "the world," and the material object of the handwritten letter was less the closed site of privacy and intimacy than a bridge to the London mediasphere. As these letters show, the metaphor of "the world" had a central component related to the circulation of information and, specifically, to the circulation of writing and letters, an association that would only expand over the course of the eighteenth century. The routes connecting London to the provinces, Europe, and America, and the letters traveling along those routes, constituted "the world" for a widening sphere of writers.

## Certified in a Letter: Epistolary Logic in the *London Gazette*

The letter's significance for the late seventeenth century's expanding understanding of "the world" left it well positioned to provide a bridge to the new forms of print that were appearing at the same time, particularly those whose function was to report on the geographical globe. As the printed newspaper emerged alongside a state postal system, it relied on readers' existing knowledge of personal letters as entailing a mixture of private and public news items in intersecting media. In function, form, and perception, the first newspapers were letters. The global, up-to-the-minute media market with which we are familiar began with the editor and the correspondent—terminology that remains with us today. Postal communication between merchants and diplomats located across Europe produced letters that were then re-used, re-circulated, and incorporated into more written and printed documents to

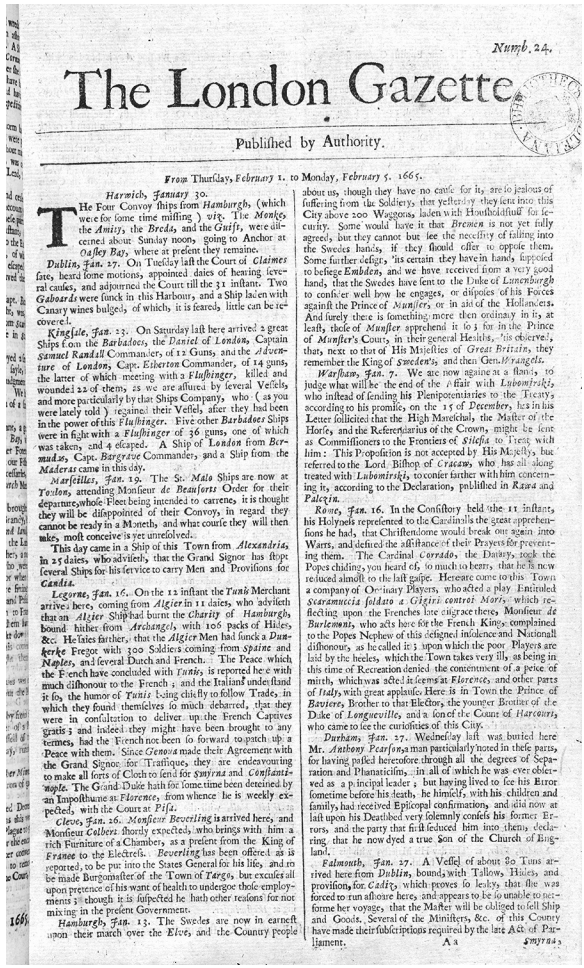
form a news network. The letter was both the source and format for news, with many printers inserting entire letters into their columns, and papers traveled along postal routes to reach readers.[60] Early papers divided their items not according to discrete "stories" and headlines, but into paragraphs with datelines that indicated the time and place from which their "advices" had been sent. A typical set of headers from an early 1666 edition of the *Gazette* simply noted the geographical origins of the news: "Dover, Jan. 13," "York, Jan. 15," "Hull, Jan. 14," "Dublin, Jan. 10," "Genoa, Jan. 6," "Naples, Dec. 19," and so on.[61] Printers arranged articles not by timeliness or interest but by the post, adding information as it arrived, so that the most recent news might appear in tiny font squeezed onto the end of the final page, or followed by white space and filler text.

The questions of exchange, reciprocity, materiality, and attention to the channel of communication, which were the central concerns of late seventeenth-century letters, proved integral to the developing genre of printed, periodical news. While editors generally removed epistolary markers like salutations and subscriptions, they often left the letters' content unedited, so that references to "the king" or "our troops" could indicate foreign circumstances. In March 1666, for example, the *Gazette* reported from Bremen, then under siege by Sweden, "A great number of Soldiers are lodged within a small space of this City. . . . Reports are given out, that all this Force is intended against us; so that we do very much apprehend the consequences."[62] Stories like this included little contextualization, instead expecting readers to keep up with unfolding narratives. Like writers such as Osborne, these correspondents demonstrated the as-yet-unnamed technique of "writing to the moment," narrating their own scribal processes in their letters. They wrote up to the moment of sending news to the post; the genre of the letter allowed them to convey the immediacy and uncertain nature of ongoing news events. Through reliance on such communications, the modern newspaper took its governing logic from the epistle: from the sense of an ongoing, unfolding exchange with no determinate ending, the need to traverse space and time to deliver information, the formatting of news into short and separate items, and the conceit of a particular reader or community of readers to whom the writing is pertinent. These ideas of what a newspaper is and does remain central to the definition of journalism today.

Prior to the 1660s, written news—whose definition as a distinct category of information was still coalescing—had circulated in a variety of ways: in handwritten newsletters, which distributed shipping and trade updates to

merchants and were often professionally produced in issues reaching the hundreds; in broadsides, which mixed fictional and historical events and appeared sporadically; in corantos and newsbooks, multipage unbound quarto books that could be reprinted from Dutch sources and often lasted only a few issues under the same title; and in occasional pamphlets or one-page separates addressing particular events or topics of interest.[63] The seventeenth-century surge in newswriting was a topic of concern for many commentators, who complained that "since the commencement of Intelligence by Printing, Pamphlets of that kinde have as numerously invaded and infested the World, as Flyes a great mans Kitchin, or a Butchers Shambles in the Summer season."[64] But while there was a flurry of political and religious pamphleteering in the Civil War period, during the Commonwealth many newsbooks, corantos, and pamphlets were suppressed, meaning that the news industry had to restart following the Restoration.[65] James Raven has argued that fixed periodical publication began in 1593 with the weekly printing of bills of mortality, and that readers over the course of the seventeenth century came more and more to expect regular news sources.[66] The standardization of mail times in the first half of the seventeenth century also meant that traders exchanging manuscript news bulletins could expect weekly updates, allowing for the formation of a European news network.[67]

But it was not until 1665 that the *London Gazette*, England's first periodical newspaper printed in vertical columns on a single, double-sided folio halfsheet and offering a biweekly collection of distinct news items, appeared. The *Gazette* represents an important turning point in news media and publishing history not only for its first-of-a-kind historical status, but also for the ways it set standards for the future.[68] As the only English newspaper from 1666 until late 1678, and the primary one until 1695,[69] it cemented the layout by which news would be collected from letters and arranged in a list of post cities (figure 1.2). In fact, the newspaper—in both form and content—barely changed until the early nineteenth century, when the profession of the journalist began to solidify; throughout the eighteenth century, papers emphasized foreign news and worked by collecting and republishing letters and printed news documents. As one magazine editor wrote in 1733, "The true *Import* and *Meaning* of the Word News is the Return of *Intelligence*, of any Kind by the Posts *Foreign* or *Domestick*."[70] The "basic unit of news," as Will Slauter has argued, was the paragraph, a distillation or excerpt of incoming correspondence. As he writes, "The division of periodicals into distinct paragraphs facilitated the movement of news from one place to another. . . . In the vocabulary of the



Numb. 24.

# The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

*From* Thursday, *February* 1. to Monday, *February* 5. 1665.

*Harwich, January* 30.

THE Four Convoy ships from *Hamburgh*, (which were for some time missing) *viz.* The *Monke*, the *Amity*, the *Bredah*, and the *Swift*, were all-certain about Sunday noon, going to Anchor at *Oasley Bay*, where at present they remaine.

*Dublin, Jan.* 27. On Tuesday last the Court of *Claimes* sate, heard some motions, appointed daies of hearing several causes, and adjourned the Court till the 31 instant. Two *Gaboards* were funck in this Harbour, and a Ship laden with Canary wines bulged, of which, it is feared, little can be recovered.

*Kingsale, Jan.* 23. On Saturday last here arrived 2 great Ships from the *Barbadoes*, the *Daniel* of *London*, Captain *Samuel Randall* Commander, of 12 Guns, and the *Adventure* of *London*, Capt. *Etherton* Commander, of 14 guns, the latter of which meeting with a *Flushinger*, killed and wounded 22 of them, as we are assured by several Vessels, and more particularly by that Ships Company, who (as you were lately told) regained their Vessel, after they had been in the power of this *Flushinger*. Five other *Barbadoes* Ships were in fight with a *Flushinger* of 36 guns, one of which was taken, and 4 escaped. A Ship of *London* from *Bermudas*, Capt. *Burgrave* Commander, and a Ship from the *Maderas* came in this day.

*Marseilles, Jan.* 19. The St. *Malo* Ships are now at *Toulon*, attending Monsieur *de Beaufort's* Order for their departure, whose Fleet being intended to carrene, it is thought they will be dispappointed of their Convoy, in regard they cannot be ready in a Moneth, and what course they will then take, most conceive is yet unresolved.

This day came in a Ship of this Town from *Alexandria*, in 25 daies, who adviseth, that the Grand Signor has stopt several Ships for his service to carry Men and Provisions for *Candia*.

*Legorne, Jan.* 16. On the 12 instant the *Tunis* Merchant arrived here, coming from *Algier* in 11 daies, who adviseth that an *Algier* Ship had burnt the *Charity* of *Hamburgh*, bound hither from *Archangel*, with 106 packs of Hides, &c. He saies farther, that the *Algier* Men had funck a *Dunkerke* Fregot with 300 Soldiers coming from *Spaine* and *Naples*, and several Dutch and French. The Peace which the French have concluded with *Tunis*, is reported here with much chearfulness to the French; and the Italians understand it so, the humor of *Tunis* being chiefly to follow Trade, in which they found themselves so much debarred, that they were in consultation to deliver up the French Captives gratis; and indeed they might have been brought to any termes, had the French not been so forward to catch up a Peace with them. Since *Genova* made their Agreement with the Grand Signor for Trafficke, they are endeavouring to make all sorts of Cloth to send for *Smyrna* and *Constantinople*. The Grand Duke hath for some time been detained by an Impossthume at *Florence*, from whence he is weekly expected, with the Court at *Pisa*.

*Cleve, Jan.* 26. *Monsieur Beverling* is arrived here, and Monsieur *Colbert* shortly expected, who brings with him a rich Furniture of a Chamber, as a present from the King of *France* to the Electress. *Beverling* has been offered as is reported, to be put into the States General for his life, and to be made Burgomaster of the Town of *Targo*, but excuses all upon pretence of his want of health to undergoe those employments; though it is suspected he hath other reasons for not mixing in the present Governments.

*Hamburgh, Jan.* 13. The Swedes are now in earnest upon their march over the *Elve*, and the Country people about us, though they have no cause for it, are so jealous of suffering from the Soldiery, that yesterday they sent into this City above 200 Waggons, laden with Household-stuff for security. Some would have it that *Bremen* is not yet fully agreed, but they cannot but see the necessity of falling into the Swedes hands, if they should offer to oppose them. Some further deſign, 'tis certain they have in hand, supposed to beſiege *Embden*, and we have received from a very good hand, that the Swedes have sent to the Duke of *Lunenburgh* to consider well how he engages, or disputes of his Forces against the Prince of *Munſter*, or in aid of the Hollanders. And surely there is something more then ordinary in it, at least, these of *Munſter* apprehend it so; for in the Prince of *Munſter's* Court, in their general Healths, 'tis observed, that, next to that of His Majesties of *Great Britain*, they remember the King of *Sweden's*, and then Gen. *Wrangels*.

*Warsham, Jan.* 7. We are now againe at a ſtand, to judge what will be the end of the Affair with *Lubomirski*, who instead of sending his Plenipotentiaries to the Treaty, according to his promise, on the 15 of *December*, hath in his Letter solliciteth that the High Marshall, the Master of the Horse, and the Referendarius of the Crown, might be sent as Commissioners to the Frontiers of *Silesia* to Treat with him: This Proposition is not accepted by His Majesty, but referred to the Lord Bishop of *Cracaw*, who has all along treated with *Lubomirski*, to confer further with him concerning it, according to the Declaration, published in *Rawa* and *Palcyn*.

*Rome, Jan.* 16. In the Consistory held the 11 instant, his Holyneſs represented to the Cardinalls the great apprehensions he had, that Christianlome would break out again into Warrs, and desired the assistance of their Prayers for preventing them. The Cardinal *Corrado*, the Datary, took the Popes chiding, you heard of, so much to heart, that he is now reſused almoſt to the last gaſpe. Hereare come to this Town a company of Ordinary Players, who acted a play Intituled *Scaramuccia ſoldato a Gieteri contrei Mori*; which reflecting upon the Frenches late disgrace there, Monsieur *de Burlemont*, who acts here for the French King, complained to the Popes Nephew of this designed insolence and Nationall dishonour, as he called it; upon which the poor Players are laid by the heeles, which the Town takes very ill, as being in this time of Recreation denied the contentment of a peice of mirth, which was acted as seems at *Florence*, and other parts of *Italy*, with great applause. Here is in Town the Prince of *Baviere*, Brother to that Elector, the younger Brother of the Duke of *Longueville*, and a Son of the Count of *Harcourt*, who came to see the curiosities of this City.

*Durham, Jan.* 27. Wednesday last was buried here Mr. *Anthony Pearſon*, a man particularly noted in these parts, for having passed hereabore through all the degrees of Separation and Phanaticiſm, in all of which he was ever observed as a principal leader; but having lived to see his Error sometime before his death, he himself, with his children and family, had received Episcopal confirmation, and did now at last upon his Deathbed very solemnly confeſs his former Errors, and the party that first seduced him into them, declaring that he now dyed a true Son of the Church of England.

*Falmouth, Jan.* 27. A Veſſel of about 80 Tuns arrived here from *Dublin*, bound with Tallow, Hides, and provision, for *Cadiz*, which proves so leaky, that she was forced to run ashoure here, and appears to be so unable to performe her voyage, that the Master will be obliged to sell Ship and Goods. Several of the Ministers, &c. of this County have made their subscriptions required by the late Act of Parliament.



*Figure 1.2.* Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the *Gazette* followed this basic layout, with paragraphs of news items separated according to the place and date from which they were posted. This combination of place and date is still in use in the modern newspaper, where it is referred to as the "dateline." The paper was printed in double columns on both sides of a folio half-sheet. *LG,* issue 24, Feb. 5, 1666 (new style), Wood 541, No. 24, Thurs. Feb. 1st – Mon. Feb. 5th 1665, The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford.

time, letters were *written* to the printer, but paragraphs were *inserted* into a newspaper."[71] The paragraphs of foreign letters in the newspaper were a visual manifestation of "the world" on the page (figure 1.3).

While the *Gazette* was the official court newspaper, it was usually com-

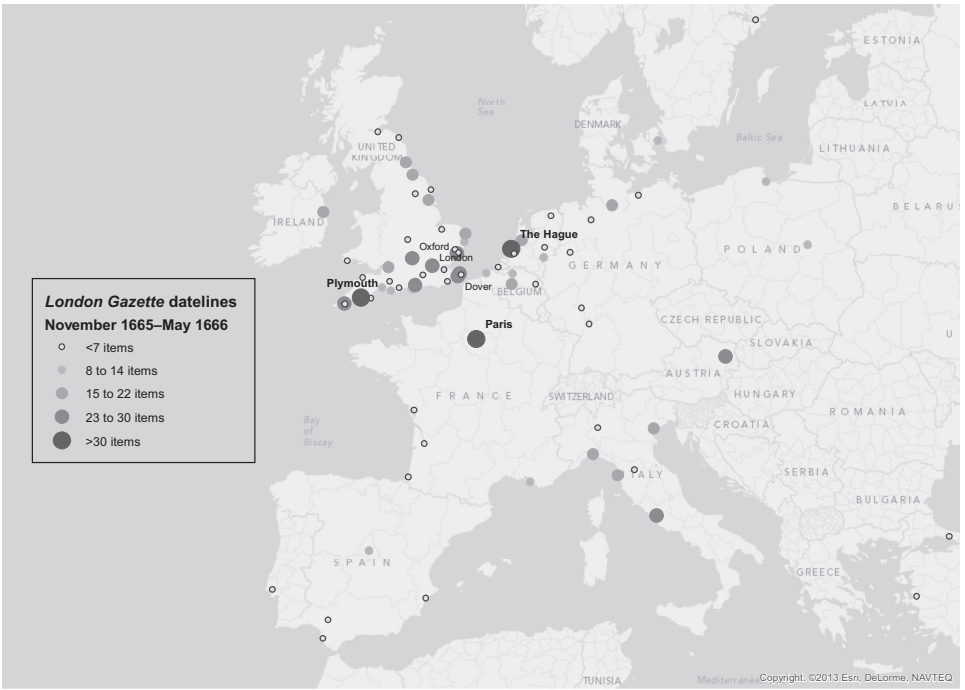



*Figure 1.3*. This map displays the aggregated datelines for the first six months of the *Gazette*, from November 1665 to May 1666. Each paragraph of news headed with a dateline—the location and date of the letter—is counted as one item, and the map displays every city with at least two datelines during this six-month period, for a total of 904 items. The three most popular sources of news were The Hague, with 33 items, Oxford with 30, and Paris with 24. Amsterdam, Brussels, Deal, Dover, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Rome, Vienna, and Yarmouth each had between 11 and 17 articles. An additional 70 cities each contributed from one to nine items, and more than half of the total items came from outside England. Map created by the author.

posed of shipping and military information with little detail of actual government work or court activity. The first issue, of 7 November 1665, included several items from Oxford, where the paper was initially located with the plague-exiled court, and offered information about changes in university administration and the king's appointment of new sheriffs for all English counties. But more than half of this first paper was made up of foreign news, and even sections datelined "Oxford" made clear that the role of the paper was to compile and re-communicate; the final item, "Oxon. Nov. 14," noted, "The *Flanders* and *Holland* Mails having miss'd us for several Posts together by reason of the cross winds as is supposed, we have no late news from those

parts only [such as] is assured by letters from Paris, 8 instant."[72] A few weeks later, the fifteenth number of the *Gazette* included notices from only a handful of British port cities, with neither London nor Oxford represented, while the rest of the items originated in Groningen (two items), Copenhagen, Florence, Brussels, Amsterdam (two items), Bordeaux, The Hague (two items), Hamburg, Vienna, Leghorn, Deventer, and Bremen.[73] Although the items were anonymous, editor Muddiman occasionally called attention to the process of transmission, writing in November 1665, for example, "I lately received from a good hand in *Rochel* dated Oct. 28 a short account of the taking of the Island S. *Ustache*, which for the manner of the attempt, may not be unworthy the communication."[74] The synecdoche of the "good hand," as we saw also with the letter-writing manuals, connected the physical act of accurate chirography to the reliable transmission of news. Through such means, the *Gazette* provided readers with a relatively detailed representation of its newsgathering methods, showing the postal interconnections of seventeenth-century Europe (figure 1.4).

Because of both an interest in overseas events at a time of continual continental war and fears of censorship or prosecution for discussing domestic politics, most of the *Gazette*'s news dealt with European proceedings, particularly those in Holland, France, and Italy, which were well connected to London by trade and postal routes. Muddiman simply cut and pasted from his correspondence, referring constantly to "Letters received" as the source of information. The use of a particular city as a dateline—e.g., "The Hague," "Paris," "Turin"—often did not indicate that the information concerned that city but merely that a letter had been sent from there. Diplomats in these locations, among the most prestigious political posts, collected news from across Europe and then sent it on to the Secretary of State's office, out of which the *Gazette* was produced. A correspondent in the 21 December 1665 issue, for example, wrote from Florence, "The news of this place is, at present, little more than the discourse of what is acted in or near *England*," while another in Madrid noted, "By fresh Letters from *Gallicia*, the *Portugal* Army is still in the field there. . . . From *Tangier* they advise, that all is well there, and concerning their *Barbary* Neighbors, they give this account by a Letter from *Tetuan* of the 4th of the last [month]."[75] Thus, while Benedict Anderson has highlighted the newspaper as a key genre in the rise of nationalism, as it "provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation,"[76] its epistolary nature in fact reveals transnational origins: as Paul Arblaster argues, "The transmission of regular newsletters by the public

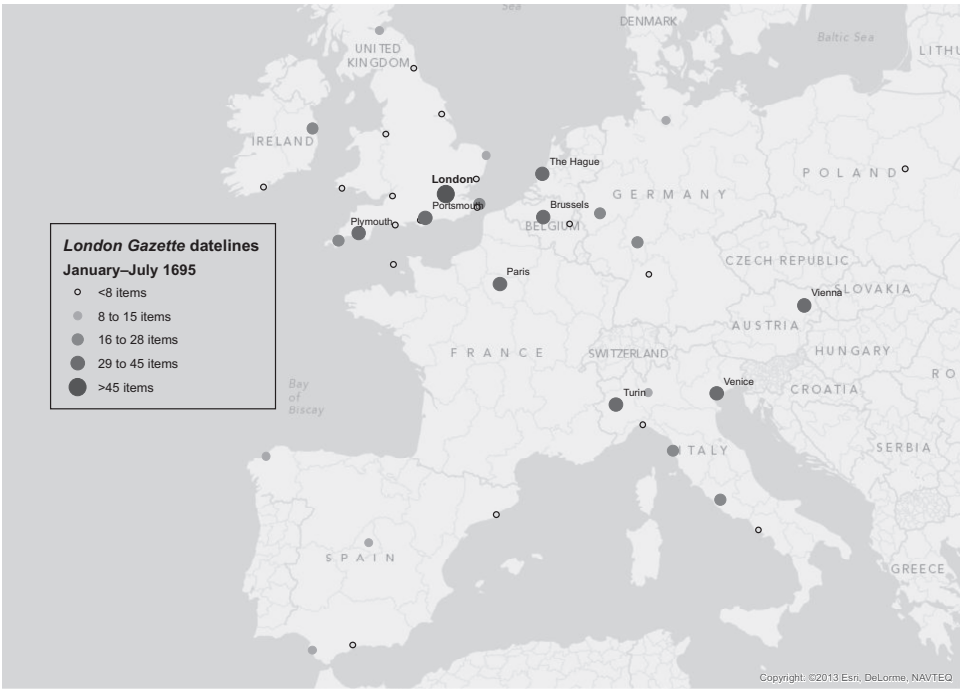



*Figure 1.4.* Aggregated datelines for the *London Gazette*, January to July 1695. When compared with Figure 1.3, the map shows that, in the first 30 years of the newspaper's existence, news became more international in scope, as well as more concentrated in the major diplomatic capitals. In this map, 433 out of 681 total items had a foreign dateline, and there were 43 separate locations, compared with 76 in Figure 1.3. Map created by the author.

posts so tightly interwove communication networks across Western Christendom that it is difficult not to speak of a single information community."[77] The newspaper began with foreign news on the first page before moving on to domestic items, and paragraphs were organized not by nation but by city. An individual dateline could open onto a range of geographical locations, and the paper presented a layered, shifting view of information moving from port to port. News production was based on the availability of letters and foreign newspapers, rather than on any inherent interest in an item.

It is true that the *Gazette*'s lack of domestic news was due in part to the government's desire to suppress and control information following the Restoration, and there were almost immediate complaints about the dearth of local reporting;[78] but the trend more directly reflects the foundational use of

the mail as a source of news.[79] As a veteran writer of manuscript newsletters, Muddiman treated his job editing the *Gazette* as essentially the same task in a different medium. In the little critical attention that manuscript newsletters have received, scholars have assumed that, because they were handwritten, they were necessarily more personal and private than the printed newspaper. Even as Ian Atherton, for example, argues that newsletters were the main form of news transmission until the early eighteenth century—more plentiful, accessible, and authoritative than printed news—he concludes, "Newsbooks were in the public sphere, whereas the newsletter belonged to the more private world of correspondence."[80] James Sutherland adds that the manuscript newsletter may have appealed to gentlemen because "it was a personal service, beginning politely with the word 'Sir', and giving the recipient the pleasant feeling that he was reading his own private correspondence."[81] The prevailing assumption is that newsletters died out soon after the introduction of the *Gazette*, and that, if they did survive, it was to transmit the kind of sensitive domestic news that would have been censored in print.

But analysis of manuscript newsletters shows that, in both content and form, they differed little from the printed productions other than in the inscription technology used to produce the text. Muddiman used the same sources of foreign correspondence for newsletters and newspapers, and he sent the productions together through the mail to provincial and London customers. Archival records show that the *Gazette*'s edition size fluctuated from 4,000 to almost 7,000 copies per biweekly number in the 1670s and '80s and that the paper remained dominant in the early 1700s—reaching more than 9,000 copies per issue in 1706—before experiencing a drop in circulation beginning around 1715. Most other daily, biweekly, and triweekly newspapers after 1695, however, had circulations of between 300 and 1,600 copies[82]—on the same order of magnitude as the late seventeenth-century newsletters, whose circulations were in the hundreds.[83] In content, each genre presented readers with a series of short items assigned to a particular location and arranged according to date of receipt; the newsletters, like the newspapers, consisted of "dry factual reporting" rather than scandal or faction.[84] Consider these two examples, the first from a January 1664 newsletter and the second from a January 1671 edition of the *Gazette*. "Ligorne [Leghorn] Jan. 12. The Pyrates among others have lately taken the Supply belonging to English merchants valued at 20000 Crownes"; "*Leghorn*, Jan. 5. The 24th instant sailed from this Port the *Jersey* and *Guernsey* Fregats for *Zant*, together with several Merchant ships bound for *Naples*, *Messina* and *Venice*."[85] Muddiman and his collabora-

tors did not so much invent a new genre as transfer the features of an existing one into a new medium.

Manuscript newsletters remained vital sources of news until, at the earliest, the 1720s, and readers did not see the written and printed forms as competing with one another. Rather, they worked together to transmit trustworthy information. Collections of manuscript newsletters, including some written by Muddiman, at the Bodleian, British, Beinecke, Clark, Huntington, and Morgan libraries demonstrate the close correspondence between the transmission of news in the two media. The handwritten newsletters provided the template for the printed newspapers: they were, for the most part, the same size and shape, a single folio half-sheet written on both sides, and they presented the same layout, with items of news separated according to place and date. The newsletters were professional productions, including a number of different clerks' handwritings. Some newsletter writers added notes to distinguish and personalize their information for particular clients; in July 1672, journalist Henry Ball sent Sir Willoughby Aston a copied-out newsletter along with a note stating that he had not provided the extra, individualized service for "a great while" since there had not been "any matter more private than the paper to trouble your Honor with"—an addendum that indicates the degree to which he considered the handwritten newsletter as neither fully private nor public.[86] The newsletters excerpted from foreign newspapers and the *Gazette*, while the printed papers offered updates on items in the letters. Both were sent through the mail to provincial customers.

A manuscript newsletter from as late as 1710, now at the Morgan Library, provides an illustration of how newsletters relied on networks of exchange and muddied the lines between manuscript and print modes of news circulation. The author, Christian Cole, was a newsletter writer located in Venice who sought to snag Charles Townshend, Viscount Townshend and then-ambassador to the Netherlands, as a correspondent and client. In sending Townshend an apparently unexpected letter—a social breach, especially to such a high-ranking official and aristocrat—Cole noted that he had first tried other routes to reach the ambassador's secretary but had not received a response. "Therefore," he wrote, "I take the liberty to repeat this offer [of correspondence] to Your Excellency, and at the same time to lett you know that the Cardinal Grimany, Vice Roy of Naples died on the 27. Sep. he had an inflammation in his bladder."[87] Cole went on to note the appointment of a new viceroy and the death of the Duchess of Modena, concluding, "I have no other news at present to send you from these parts." Cole used the usual rules for

formatting a letter to a social superior, leaving blank half of the first side of the folded sheet for the superscribed heading "My Lord," but in other ways his letter resembled a printed text: at the bottom of each page he penned in catchwords, and he employed an even italic hand. Cole, we can surmise, hoped that the professional appearance and valuable political news would lead Townshend to overlook his forwardness and subscribe to the newsletter, which would have been merely a supplement to the many printed and written news sources such an important political figure consumed every post day.

Both newsletters and newspapers presented bridges to another kind of handwritten news document: the diplomatic letter or circular, a form of official news reporting that was a key element of a diplomat's job. Since the *Gazette* operated out of the Secretary of State's office, its editors directly received diplomatic correspondence for inclusion in the paper, and diplomats understood that one purpose of providing "intelligence" was for it to be printed. As Daniel Woolf argues, "The gathering of information and the careful control of its release in the press indeed became one of the Secretary of State's major functions after the Restoration."[88] The Secretary of State's office year after year sent out a form letter to diplomats in different locations announcing, "His Majesty has been pleased to give Direction that the London Gazette, which is published by the Royal Authority, should for the future be regularly and sufficiently furnished with all proper Advices and Intelligence from abroad." To that end, diplomats were instructed to send "every Post . . . a written Relation of such Occurrences and Transactions as shall from time to time become the Subject of News," in addition to "all Pieces or Papers of a publick nature, relating to the State, the Church, the Army, the Marine, the Police, Commerce, the Finances, and the Coyn."[89] It is frequently possible to move back and forth between diplomatic correspondence and items in the *Gazette*, and the style of reporting is nearly identical; for example, in 1708 secretary Adam Cardonnel wrote from Oudenaarde, the site of a battle during the closely followed War of the Spanish Succession, "We cannot yet give the particulars of this great victory, but some Thousands of Prisoners and among them some general officers are already brought into this Town." Cardonnel's description of the battle was repeated verbatim in the *Gazette*. But he also sent Under-Secretary of State George Tilson a reproof for publishing inaccurate information, noting, "What comes from the Foreign Ministers abroad, ought to admit of a little consideration before it be sent to the Press."[90] The printed newspaper relied on semi-public diplomatic information arriving from these "foreign correspondents," whose official government status lent credence to their reports.

The prevalence of manuscript newsletters and epistolary newsgathering methods into the early eighteenth century provides a key to understanding both the ways writers and readers classified the era's shifting media environment and the dominance of the letter as a source of news. Despite the *Gazette*'s official government provenance—with the banner "Published by Authority" splashed across the top of every issue—it can be difficult for the modern reader to understand the editorial "authority" in the *Gazette* unless she takes into account the authoritative status that manuscript letters brought to the text. The self-referentiality of the letters, which constantly reverted to "the news we told you of in our last," called attention to the epistolary nature of the communications and the ongoing interaction of a correspondence community. The physical layout of the newspaper, resembling a list of letters and arranged according to the arrival of the post, signaled the network of newsgathering and documentation that lay behind the publication. Over and over again, these authors and printers associated epistolary communication with a kind of fact-based truth, one that presented itself as self-authenticating in the way that it combined supposedly impartial information with the form of publicly circulating letters-in-print.[91] As one newsbook editor wrote in 1646, "The most unquestionable way to make good intelligence, is to deliver it in the same Letters from which it was received."[92] The newspaper did not transform the manuscript letter so much as continually refer back to the handwritten original and the scene of manuscript circulation.

As we saw in the letters of Osborne, Locke, and Dryden, seventeenth-century epistolary practice was based on the logic of exchange: beginning a correspondence was a significant act that enmeshed both parties in an ongoing series of reciprocation through writing. Letter writers used the term "news" extensively to describe the personal, familial, local, international, and commercial events their letters documented. Even before the news was commoditized in newsbooks and, to a greater extent, newspapers, it acted in commodity-like ways in a social exchange that had defined requirements and expectations. The main innovation of the early news sources, then, was to change the ratio of epistolary communication. Although the personal letter was often a quasi-public document, its function was as a communication from one to one or one to a few. Printed news changed not the purpose but the scale of the communication: news would now issue from one to many or even, with the inclusion of multiple correspondents, from many to many. At this time the letter was not the space in which "the individual unfolded himself in his subjectivity," as Jürgen Habermas writes of eighteenth-century correspondence, but rather

the most appropriate genre for transferring news from a particular time and place to a growing body of readers.[93] Letters were open not in principle but in practice, as an emerging norm regarding the intimacy of communications continually conflicted with the actual ways in which letters circulated. Instead of undermining a "private" genre, therefore, the process of printing letters amplified their tendency to dissolve boundaries between public and private spheres. Across the realm of news media, late seventeenth-century readers expected to see letters, whether fictional or authentic, from public figures or allegorical characters, constantly finding their way into print and serving as the basis for an expanding news network.

## Conclusion

The letter proved to be a practical and flexible genre for the budding newsmongers—professional and amateur, working in print, manuscript, and oral media—of the late seventeenth century. The period between 1665 and 1695 encouraged a fruitful overlap and reconfiguration of genres and media. The strange mix of openness and repression—perhaps most clearly represented by the lapse in 1679, reinstitution in 1685, and final lapse in 1695 of the Licensing Act—that characterized the late seventeenth-century printing trade can be seen to have favored a reliance on epistolary techniques as modes of both newsgathering and publishing. Printing letters deflected responsibility for individual items from an editor to his correspondents, while also contributing to a nascent sense of independence and objectivity. While efforts at censorship continued and the *Gazette* was by no means an independent news source, controls were less stringent than during the Commonwealth and became even laxer during the periods of political and religious turbulence that began in the 1670s; the publishing industry was "only erratically" monitored following the Restoration.[94] At the same time, a confluence of historical circumstances—among them a more available state postal system, correspondence with foreign merchants, a desire for news and entertainment in the unpredictable Restoration period, and access to printing technology—stimulated expansion and experimentation in the industry. Both the postal system and the press were becoming standardized and professionalized, but they retained idiosyncrasies that allowed them to work symbiotically as they grew in influence. The epistolary organization of the newspaper brought into view the mediasphere of "the world," which the reader could now hold in his or her hand. The manuscript genre of the letter lent its adaptability to the transmission of news at a crucial moment in the history of the print medium.

As the principal British news source for the first quarter century of the genre's existence, the *London Gazette* involved itself in readers' everyday lives by drawing on and solidifying existing connections between the post and the circulation of news. It gathered its information from public and private letters, and it formatted the newssheet in itemized epistolary accounts. It reached readers through the mail, and it was sold by postmasters who began a tradition of mailing newspapers for free.[95] It developed the notion of the newspaper as a genre that would provide periodic updates on ongoing events, and it used letters as proof or evidence of its assertions. The networked relationship between an individual author and a known recipient gave the letter genre a status that allowed it to serve as eyewitness testimony in the absence of the witness. In the later seventeenth century, other experiments in print publication would build on these associations and use postal communities to constitute associations of authors and readers, advertising their dependence on letters and the post even more explicitly than the first newspapers had. Readers and writers, always sensitive to the subtle preferences signaled by the choice of publication medium, would remain aware of the epistolary bridges between the two technological poles critics tend to see: the private, handwritten letter and the open-access, impersonal, printed newspaper.

# Questions and Answers

## Epistolary Exchange and the Early Periodical Press

At the turn of the eighteenth century, London was the center of "the world"—the postal communications system connecting new genres of writing in manuscript and print—for the literate Briton. As printing, literacy, and the empire expanded, correspondents used the newsletters, newspapers, and pamphlets discussed in chapter 1, as well as emerging forms such as periodicals and guidebooks, to map the world that they accessed through the writing of letters and the reading of printed letters. London housed the majority of the nation's printers, and authors began to inscribe the capital city itself, producing dissertations, histories, and catalogues of its every corner and alley. At the heart of literary London was London Bridge, minutes by foot from the coffeehouses clustered around the Royal Exchange and the booksellers around St. Paul's Cathedral. The bridge was a central location for book production and distribution, and as its printers produced works documenting the history and geography of London—Nathan Bailey's 1722 *Antiquities of London and Westminster*, for example, was printed "at the *Three Bibles* on *London-Bridge*"[1]—the bridge and its businesses became the subject of their attention. As one R.B. concluded in his *Historical Remarks and Observations upon the Ancient and Present State of London and Westminster* (1703), "This Bridge for admirable Workmanship, vastness of Foundation, and Dimensions, and for stately Houses, and rich Shops built thereon, surpasseth all others in *Europe*."[2] The span's status as a "living bridge" lent it a special fascination.

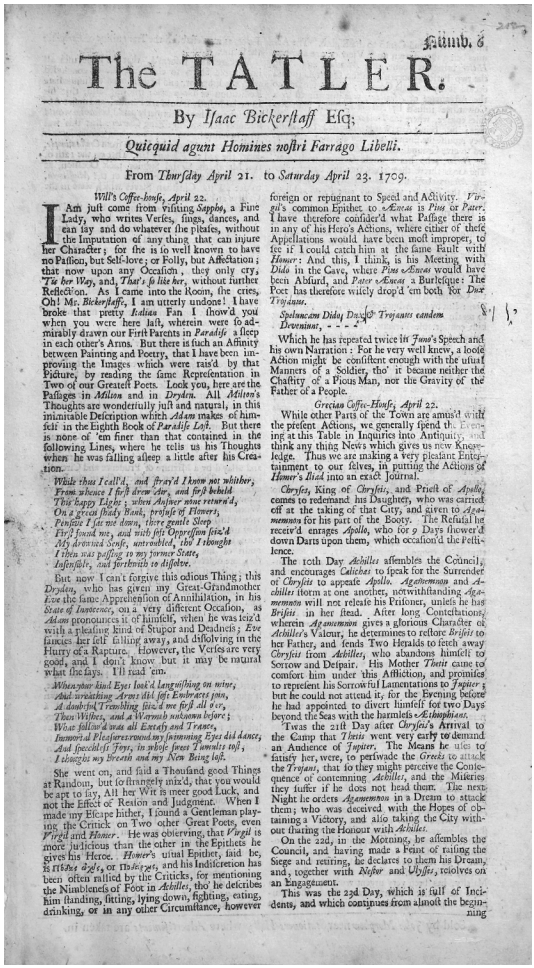
London Bridge, with its jam-packed rows of buildings and core commercial location connecting the City and Southwark, had been an important site for composition and printing almost from its completion in the early thirteenth century, and by the early eighteenth it featured hundreds of shops, including many printers, stationers, and booksellers; the supervisors of the bridge, the Bridge House, also raised funds for its maintenance by renting out space to printers and booksellers in St. Paul's courtyard and Paternoster Row.[3] While the bridge was the only pedestrian crossing of the Thames within London until the mid-eighteenth century, it was as much a destination as a con-

duit: shoppers from all over the city converged upon it to purchase lace, jewelry, stockings, fish, and vegetables, in addition to books, periodicals, and paper. And many readers who had never set foot on the bridge would nevertheless associate it with printing and bookselling, as the address featured prominently on thousands of title pages. However, its unique standing would diminish over the course of the eighteenth century, as new bridges were built and the medieval structure became dangerously unstable, and Parliament ordered the demolition of all houses and shops in midcentury. By the reign of Victoria, the living bridge had been replaced with the modern, unadorned New London Bridge.

London Bridge stands here as a figure for the evolving trend of printed letters at the turn of the eighteenth century. In chapter 1, we saw how the manuscript newsletter, and the circulation across Europe and the colonies of news in personal letters, provided a model for the modes of newsgathering and dissemination that became standard with the invention of the newspaper in the late seventeenth century. But the bridge genre of the letter did not represent a one-way street from manuscript to print. Like a physical bridge, a bridge genre can offer multiple directions of access, simultaneously spanning and dividing—drawing attention to similarity as well as difference.[4] If the letter had forged a link from manuscript news circulation to the professional printed newspaper, it proved elemental again when authors started to redeploy and satirize newspaper conventions in the turn-of-the-century's newest market-altering genre, the periodical, which featured short essays on miscellaneous topics continued multiple times per week.[5] As we shall see, periodicals' self-reflexive commentary upon the letters within their pages both elicited readers' writing and led authors to begin teasing apart the categories that would define eighteenth-century literature: of public print, private manuscript, and the authorial figures who had a special ability to connect these spheres. In early periodicals, an epistolary metadiscourse emerged that turned attention to the prominent role of letters across the spectrum of print—pointing a spotlight on the bridge itself. Letters became increasingly mediated as, in addition to their ongoing function of reportage, they took on narrative roles, assisting in the creation of entertaining tales for readers and of the fictional personae that periodicalists inhabited. But while the letter's bridging function partook in the escalating characterization of print as a dominant medium of communication, this escalation did not occur solely at the expense of manuscript. Even as print became more authoritative and widespread, it remained intimately interconnected with scribal modes of production and circulation.

In this chapter, I focus on the letter genre in three periodicals—John Dunton's *Athenian Mercury*, Daniel Defoe's *Review*, and Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *Spectator*—in order to expose the complicated, contradictory means by which some of the period's most imitated and notorious authors began to privilege the print medium even as they insisted upon their dependence on handwritten sources. At the same time as periodical authors took advantage of print by using pseudonyms, authorial personae, and the pose of correspondence, they imported into their texts the epistolary environment of the newspaper, the periodical's immediate precursor in format and content (figure 2.1).[6] Dunton, Defoe, Steele, and Addison copied correspondence, laid out text in letter form, asked for reader feedback, reported personal interactions with members of their audiences, offered proto-epistolary fiction, and anticipated an ongoing exchange between editors, contributors, and readers, often insisting on the material existence of the reader letters they reproduced. They were also equivocal about the character of print; Dunton wrote in 1691 that "Printing has done more service and disservice too to the World" than gunpowder, while Addison noted in 1714, "It is a melancholy thing to consider that the Art of Printing, which might be the greatest Blessing to Mankind, should prove detrimental to us, and that it should be made use of to scatter Prejudice and Ignorance through a People, instead of conveying to them Truth and Knowledge."[7] But print enabled a broader and longer lasting influence, giving the text greater impact, as Defoe noted: "A Book Printed is a Record . . . and conveys its Contents for Ages to come, to the Eternity of mortal Time, when the Author is forgotten in his Grave."[8] Early periodical writers filled their pages with discussions of their own material conditions of publication, and they frequently used the genre of the letter as a lens for such discussions.

The periodical publications of the turn of the eighteenth century offer a paradigmatic example of the letter at work as a bridge genre. As genre distinctions began to proliferate in the early eighteenth century—providing the origins of many of our most recognizably modern literary forms, from the magazine to the novel, the book review, and the biography—periodicals were foremost in a market-wide phenomenon that emphasized the authority of letters in the fact-finding process but went further than seventeenth-century newspapers by asking for—and publishing—epistolary feedback from readers. In many of these publications, as with the personal letters discussed in chapter 1, the processes of letter writing transformed into the content of the text. These pioneering works created self-conscious literary circuits where participants could oscillate between the positions of reader and writer by means of the letter



Numb. 6

# The TATLER.

By *Isaac Bickerstaff* Esq;

*Quicquid agunt Homines nostri Farrago Libelli.*

From *Thursday April* 21. to *Saturday April* 23. 1709.

*Will's Coffee-house, April* 22.

I Am just come from visiting *Sappho*, a Fine Lady, who writes Verses, sings, dances, and can say and do whatever the pleases, without the Imputation of any thing that can injure her Character; for she is so well known to have no Passion, but Self-love; or Folly, but Affectation; that now upon any Occasion, they only cry, *'Tis her Way*, and, *That's so like her*, without further Reflection. As I came into the Room, the cries, Oh! Mr. *Bickerstaffe*, I am utterly undone! I have broke that pretty *Italian* Fan I shew'd you when you were here last, wherein were to admirably drawn our First Parents in *Paradise* a sleep in each other's Arms. But there is such an Affinity between Painting and Poetry, that I have been improving the Images which were rais'd by that Picture, by reading the same Representation in Two of our Greatest Poets. Look you, here are the Passages in *Milton* and in *Dryden*. All *Milton's* Thoughts are wonderfully just and natural, in this inimitable Discription which *Adam* makes of himself in the Eighth Book of *Paradise Lost*. But there is none of 'em finer than that contained in the following Lines, where he tells us his Thoughts when he was falling asleep a little after his Creation.

*While thus I call'd, and stray'd I know not whither,*
*From whence I first drew Air, and first beheld*
*This happy Light; when Answer none return'd,*
*On a green shady Bank, profuse of Flowers,*
*Pensive I sat me down, there gentle Sleep*
*First found me, and with soft Oppression seiz'd*
*My drowsed Sense, untroubled, tho I thought*
*I then was passing to my former State,*
*Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve.*

But now I can't forgive this odious Thing; this *Dryden*, who has given my Great-Grandmother *Eve* the same Apprehension of Annihilation, in his *State of Innocence*, on a very different Occasion, as *Adam* pronounces it of himself, when he was seiz'd with a pleasing Kind of Stupor and Deadness; *Eve* fancies her self falling away, and dissolving in the Hurry of a Rapture. However, the Verses are very good, and I don't know but it may be natural what she says. I'll read 'em.

*Methought that Eyes look'd languishing on mine,*
*And wreathing Arms did soft Embraces join,*
*A doubtful Trembling seiz'd me first all over,*
*Then Wishes, and a Warmth not known before;*
*Which follow'd was all Ecstasy and Trance,*
*Immortal Pleasures crowd my swimming Eyes did dance,*
*And speechless Joys, in whose sweet Tumults lost,*
*I thought my Breath and my Next Being lost.*

She went on, and said a Thousand good Things at Random, but so strangely mix'd, that you would be apt to say, All her Wit is meer good Luck, and not the Effect of Reason and Judgment. When I made my Escape hither, I found a Gentleman playing the Critick on Two other Great Poets, even *Virgil* and *Homer*. He was observing, that *Virgil* is more judicious than the other in the Epithets he gives his Heroe. *Homer's* usual Epithet, said he, is either *Ἀγαθὸς*, or *Πολύτλας*, and his Indiscretion has been often rallied by the Criticks, for mentioning the Nimbleness of Foot in *Achilles*, tho' he describes him standing, sitting, lying down, fighting, eating, drinking, or in any other Circumstance, however foreign or repugnant to Speed and Activity. *Virgil's* common Epithet to *Æneas* is *Pius* or *Pater*. I have therefore consider'd what Passage there is in any of his Hero's Actions, where either of these Appellations would have been most improper, to see if I could catch him at the same Fault with *Homer*: And this, I think, is his Meeting with *Dido* in the Cave, where *Pius Æneas* would have been Absurd, and *Pater Æneas* a Burlesque: The Poet has therefore wisely drop'd 'em both for *Dux Trojanus*.

*Speluncam Didus Dux & Trojanus eandem*
*Devenimus, - - - - -*

Which he has repeated twice in *Juno's* Speech and his own Narration: For he very well knew, a lofty Action might be consistent enough with the usual Manners of a Soldier, tho' it became neither the Chastity of a Pious Man, nor the Gravity of the Father of a People.

*Grecian Coffee-House, April* 22.

While other Parts of the Town are amus'd with the present Actions, we generally spend the Evening at this Table in Inquiries into Antiquity, and think any thing News which gives us new Knowledge. Thus we are making a very pleasant Entertainment to our selves, in putting the Actions of *Homer's Iliad* into an exact Journal.

*Chryses*, King of *Chrysis*, and Priest of *Apollo*, comes to redemand his Daughter, who was carried off at the taking of that City, and given to *Agamemnon* for his part of the Booty. The Refusal he receiv'd enrages *Apollo*, who for 9 Days shower'd down Darts upon them, which occasion'd the Pestilence.

The 10th Day *Achilles* assembles the Council, and encourages *Calchas* to speak for the Surrender of *Chryseis* to appease *Apollo*. *Agamemnon* and *Achilles* storm at one another, notwithstanding *Agamemnon* will not release his Prisoner, unless he has *Briseis* in her stead. After long Contestations, wherein *Agamemnon* gives a glorious Character of *Achilles's* Valour, he determines to rettore *Briseis* to her Father, and sends Two Heralds to fetch away *Chryseis* from *Achilles*, who abandons himself to Sorrow and Despair. His Mother *Thetis* came to comfort him under this Affliction, and promises to represent his Sorrowful Lamentations to *Jupiter*; but he could not attend it, for the Evening before he had appointed to divert himself for two Days beyond the Seas with the harmless *Æthiopians*.

'Twas the 21st Day after *Chryses's* Arrival to the Camp that *Thetis* went very early to demand an Audience of *Jupiter*. The Means he uses to satisfy her, were, to perswade the *Greeks* to attack the *Trojans*, that so they might perceive the Consequence of contemning *Achilles*, and the Mischiefs they suffer if he does not head them. The next Night he orders *Agamemnon* in a Dream to attack them; who was deceived with the Hopes of obtaining a Victory, and also taking the City without sharing the Honour with *Achilles*.

On the 22d, in the Morning, he assembles the Council, and having made a Feint of raising the Siege and retiring, he declares to them his Dream, and, together with *Nestor* and *Ulysses*, resolves on an Engagement.

This was the 23d Day, which is full of Incidents, and which continues from almost the begin-

ning

*Figure 2.1.* Richard Steele was editor of the *Gazette* from 1707 to 1710, and he adopted the dateline-separated news layout in the *Tatler*. Instead of foreign locations, however, his articles were all associated with London sites: White's Chocolate House, Will's Coffee-House, the Grecian Coffee-House, St. James's Coffee-House, and "my own Apartment." Steele calls these locations "all Parts of the Known and Knowing World." *T* No. 1, April 12, 1709, Nichols Newspaper Collection, Nich. Newsp. 15A, fol. 212, The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford.

genre: printed letters appeared as ways to convey information to the reader, imagine him or her as a member of a semi-select reading community, emphasize the ongoing nature of the communication, and solicit feedback that could create further texts. In the process, periodicals elaborated early versions of

concepts such as fact, truth, fiction, and authorship, all categories whose fluctuations over the course of the eighteenth century provide key indices to the era's literary history. If personal letters continued to include extensive discussion of handwriting, paper, ink, postage, and the difficulty of transmitting information and sentiment in writing, this epistolary reflexivity also emerged in the world of printed periodicals via the bridge genre of the letter.[9]

The generic status of the letter in the late seventeenth century—as an everyday form of writing that, while still limited to the literate, was increasingly common—made it a practical, adaptable, and accessible tool for Britain's budding newsmongers and essayists. Letters bridged manuscript and printed worlds, offering a shortcut to authorship and readership for emerging constituencies. As Clare Brant writes, "Because letter-writing was so widely practised, it supplied numerous crossing-points between print and script. . . . Though letters were not the only means by which people entered print, they were one of the most widespread."[10] Likewise, Robert Adams Day highlights the usefulness of the letter genre for the Grub Street periodicalist: "The very amorphousness of the *familiar* letter made it ideal for the writer who chose to produce a variety of diverting tidbits for popular entertainment and did not have the inclination or the leisure for sustained work."[11] By the time periodicals began appearing at the turn of the century, English readers had a half-century's worth of experience with letters as sources of printed news, and Londoners lived in a particularly dynamic writing and publishing environment. In 1680, an enterprising merchant named William Dockwra set up a postal service offering 10 to 12 daily deliveries in London and Westminster, for which he charged one penny; two years later the Crown took over the Penny Post, which operated separately from the General Post Office until the nineteenth century.[12] Londoners could thus expect to be in constant written contact. At the same time, the early eighteenth century saw the nationwide expansion of by- and cross-posts, making the postal network denser and mail cheaper, and transforming "the ill-shaped wheel of the main post roads into a web of routes that would in time gossamer the whole land."[13] Postal connection became an increasingly obvious and accessible fact of life for both urban and provincial Britons.

The year 1695 marked a turning point in the scope of the postal world within which periodicalists engaged their audiences. The lapse of the Licensing Act, which had imposed prepublication censorship—what we now call "prior restraint"—and officially limited printing presses to London, Oxford, and Cambridge, led to a rapid wave of new periodical titles across the country. While there were zero provincial newspapers in 1700, there were 13 in

1710, 24 in 1723, and 42 in 1746. In total, more than 130 papers had been founded outside of London by 1760, although not all survived for long.[14] And there was an even more immediate takeoff in periodical and newspaper publication within the city. While the *London Gazette* was, for the most part, the only available newspaper before 1688, and one of a handful after that, in the month after the lapse of the Licensing Act five new London papers appeared.[15] Two papers started within three days of the act's demise, and by 1712 the city offered a dozen periodicals.[16] The total number of printers and printing presses also mounted; while there were around 50 printing houses in London in 1695, by 1705 that number had increased to 70 houses operating 150 presses.[17] These quantitative increases had qualitative effects on the print market, fostering competition and encouraging greater innovation, experimentation, and differentiation.

The new periodicals of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries offer a crucial site for the consideration of developing media environments because they pulled in many directions at once—toward the manuscript circulation of letters and toward the commercializing print marketplace, toward the local site of coffeehouse conversation and toward the global spread of the growing empire, toward the individual, unique letter writer and toward the impersonal reading public. This was an experimental, self-reflective moment in which authors across a range of print publications turned their attention to their own conditions of reading, writing, and circulation, which frequently implicated the letter. While the use of letters in the first newspapers had been instrumental in their development, it had also gone mostly unremarked, a situation that changed in the self-aware commentary of the periodical genre, one of whose central characteristics quickly became an interest in documenting and describing its own features and bugs. In periodicals that range from the famous to the largely forgotten, we see these tensions playing out as authors continued to focus on letter writing as a central concern of the printed realm.

## "A Man That Prints Every Thing": Writing to the *Athenian Mercury*

Scholars have described the takeoff in periodical publication that occurred at the turn of the eighteenth century as a print-culture event that signaled the new medium's dominance and set the stage for the emergence of the novel as the major publishing trend of the eighteenth century.[18] The "rise of periodical studies," as it has recently been called, has established the genre as a "subfield of print culture."[19] Printed periodicals have been "given a place of privilege in

the foundation of the public sphere" because they were seen to enable the wide-scale discussion of politics and culture.[20] Meanwhile, studies of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century letters describe epistolarity as multimodal, not print-centric. The prominence of the letter genre in periodicals, novels, and magazines demonstrates that the "relationship between script and print is emphatically simultaneous not sequential: that is, correspondence and printed letters co-existed in multiple and complex ways."[21] But even as critics recognize this interconnection, recent epistolary studies have tended to shift away from print and toward archival study of manuscript correspondence.[22] Despite the acknowledged scope of printed letters, scant attention has been paid to the complicated nature of the epistolary periodical, a crucial and neglected early eighteenth-century genre.[23]

Given this ongoing scholarly divide between printed periodicals and manuscript correspondence, the letters in early periodicals have generally been understood in two ways. First, they served as "truth claims" whose goal was to establish credibility and legitimacy. J. Paul Hunter argues that documents like letters, diaries, and eyewitness notes are important to late seventeenth-century narratives because they "assert factuality" and "claim to represent what the present-day world was like."[24] This tendency was part of a larger trend in which all sorts of texts, including those we now identify as fictional, included elaborate declarations of truth.[25] Second, letters played a role in generating the public sphere by, paradoxically, representing the private. The early periodical was a site for the public discussion of private concerns, such as familial relationships and gender roles, which often appeared in the guise of reader letters.[26] The periodical was crucial to the public sphere, critics argue, because it drew a contrast between the publicity of print and the privacy of manuscript.

But a variety of the era's most popular and influential periodicals demonstrate the print market's continued reliance on overlapping networks of manuscript, epistolary correspondence and oral communication within the burgeoning print marketplace. The role of the letter genre in forming the mixed, fluctuating nature of the periodical was early apparent in the career of John Dunton, who continually used printed letters both to name his allies and antagonists and to employ a variety of authorial masks. Dunton seems to have never had a disagreement, or received a letter, he was unwilling to see in print. Years after he had squandered the reputation and income he earned through his popular, genre-defining question-and-answer periodical, the *Athenian Mercury* (1691–97), he continued to assert his own prominence by publishing ad hominem attacks—backed up by epistolary "evidence"—against a range

of his friends and associates, from his second wife and mother-in-law to nearly every bookseller, printer, binder, stationer, engraver, illustrator, and licenser with whom he came into contact during his long career as a book merchant and print shop proprietor. As a London printer with, as he described himself, a tendency toward "Rambling and Scribling Humours," he had easy access to the print medium as a means to "communicate to the World" his grievances and self-justifications.[27] Dunton made little distinction between written and printed letters, and no piece of correspondence was off limits to the press: at the top of a tender, conciliatory, and laboriously inscribed letter from his estranged wife, Sarah, dated July 1699, Dunton scrawled, "For a letter to Incognito," a name he frequently used to sign printed epistles.[28] Two years later, Sarah lashed out at him for his tendency to view any manuscript as fodder for his books, writing in cramped handwriting and erratic spelling: "i an all good people think you never married me for love but for my mony an soe you have had the use of itt all this while too banter an laught att me an my mother by your magoty printen."[29] Another correspondent, who signed a 1710 letter "JW" and warned Dunton against printing more letters from a female acquaintance, ended with a similar accusation: "There's no writing to a man that prints every Thing."[30]

Printing letters allowed Dunton to engage a number of themes that recurred across his career: a disavowal of the title of author combined with a fierce claim to generic originality, a tenuously upheld promise to maintain his own and his correspondents' anonymity, and a sense that any text was open to future improvement and emendation through an ongoing cycle of provocation and response. As an author, printer, and bookseller, Dunton operated from an early modern standpoint that privileged the act of communication and the goal of connection over textual originality or accuracy. Over the course of his career, he rarely published a work that did not include significant epistolary aspects, whether it was his use of letters from his wife and mother-in-law to "prove" that he was justified in seeking a loan of £300 from his wife's jointure, or his frequent reprinting of a "letter to his creditors" to try to avoid arrest for his debts. He was a highly idiosyncratic figure, but also one whose primary authorial methods took to their extreme the intermedial status of the periodical letter. Print was an extension of his social and communications networks, different from speech and manuscript in its ability to amplify his preexisting, hyper-personal concerns, including his debt, his marital strife, his professional reputation, and his religious beliefs. At the same time, he asserted an audience of hundreds if not thousands of readers, and his

most popular works used authorial personae to maintain the stance, if not the fact, of anonymity. In these texts, the manuscript letter served as proof of personal feeling or interaction, even when "publish'd to the World"; as he wrote in 1700, "My Comfort is, the *Printing of this Letter* will let the World (and my *Few Creditors*) see that *I* wou'd be Honest, if my *Mother*, or *Wife* either, had so much Love for me as to let me."[31] He assumed a self-selecting readership interested in his exhaustive takedowns of friends and acquaintances within the world of London correspondence.

Dunton represented himself as the hub of a nationwide epistolary network circulating around his print shop, the Raven, in the Poultry just around the corner from the Penny Post Office and London Bridge. His publications referenced a mixed-media environment of porous realms, with manuscript and print afforded equal prominence as means to create and circulate texts. This ability to straddle the overlapping communications networks of the media world can help account for the popularity of his epistolary periodical, the *Athenian Mercury*, which ran for more than 500 issues between 1691 and 1697. Scholars agree that the journal—which appeared in its individual editions under the title of the *Mercury* but was bound and sold in volumes as the *Athenian Gazette*—offers the first example of a publication made up entirely of (at least purportedly) reader-supplied questions and professional answers.[32] Every issue featured lists of readers' questions, on topics from geography and natural philosophy to religion and sexuality, along with the answers of the "Athenian Society," which purported to have up to a dozen members but in fact consisted of Dunton and two associates, Richard Sault and Samuel Wesley.[33] They appointed themselves arbiters of morality, mathematics, and metaphysics, claiming academic credentials and expertise. In doing so, they sidestepped questions of fact and fiction, ignoring objections that the Athenian Society did not actually exist by focusing instead on the reality of the epistolary relationship with readers. For example, in answer to the question, "*Which is the best way to come into the Converse and Acquaintance of the Noble* Athenian Society[?]," the authors wrote, "Noble Sir, by reading our *Mercuries*, which will gratifie your Request with ease, without putting you to the trouble of first walking to *Smith*'s Coffee-house, and thence *no Body knows whither*."[34] The "Society" eschewed in-person interaction but encouraged constant epistolary intercourse as its substitute.

The *Mercury* came into existence at an exploratory literary juncture. Concepts of originality and literary property were in flux between the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695 and the first "Copyright Act" in 1710,[35] exhibiting an

instability that Dunton both assuaged and took advantage of through his incorporation of reader letters. The periodical's structuring invocation of the reader as a source of writing is one reflection of this shifting legal and conceptual terrain; while Dunton referred to the question-and-answer format as his intellectual "property," he also disowned the title of "author" and noted his debts to his readers in supplying the questions. To emphasize: Dunton insisted on his originality in inventing the question-and-answer genre, which he called his "sole Right and Property," but not in authoring the content of his periodical.[36] In this way, his use of letters anticipated that of novelist Samuel Richardson, who similarly claimed that he had invented the genre of "writing to the moment" while simultaneously maintaining that he was the "editor" of *Pamela* and *Clarissa*. Dunton's version of copyright—which located originality not in the author's writing but in the print worker's novel use of genre—modeled a cyclical and communal version of authorship and readership, one that depended on the cooperation of readers as contributors.

This not-quite-modern notion of literary property—which stands counter to the contemporary distinction between an idea in general and the copyrightable expression of that idea—allowed Dunton to position his readership as an interactive community and to disperse authority for the text among the group. By figuring periodical publication as epistolary conversation, in which any reader unhappy with an answer could request "a fuller satisfaction in the next Paper," Dunton integrated the continuous, exchange-oriented logic of letter writing into the realm of print.[37] But the new medium also afforded changed possibilities; as Dunton wrote in his memoirs, the genesis of the "question-Project" lay in anonymity: "The first rude *Hint* of it, was no more than *a confus'd Idea of concealing the Querist and answering his Question*."[38] The authors continued in the preface to the first volume: "The Design is briefly . . . to remove those Difficulties and Dissatisfactions, that shame or fear of appearing ridiculous by asking Questions, may cause several Persons to labour under, who now have opportunities of being resolv'd in any Question without knowing their Informer."[39] While some correspondents signed their real names to their questions, and while the makeup of the "society" may "have been an open secret at least within bookselling and publishing circles,"[40] the normative stance of the publication was to favor secrecy. And as Lawrence Klein and Patricia Meyer Spacks each has shown, this was the primary eighteenth-century meaning of "privacy," which referred more to a distinction between open and closed intelligence than to one between public and domestic spheres.[41] While we now associate personal letters with privacy,

they in fact lacked secrecy, as they were subject to interception by government agents, opening by parents and husbands, and requests to be read aloud. The Athenian Society, meanwhile, was "fix'd . . . both as to Number and Privacy," but was "willing to receive any Gentleman's Thoughts upon what we write."[42] The printed letter, as the Athenians figured it, enabled a level of privacy that perhaps surpassed that of manuscript.

The surprising privacy of the printed letter was most evident in the *Mercury*'s discussions of gender, which once again upset scholarly conventions regarding the supposedly feminine nature of eighteenth-century letter writing. While Kathryn Shevelow has argued that the periodical helped to cement cultural ideas regarding women's domestic nature by paradoxically bringing the private into public discussion,[43] Dunton's inclusion of women writers epitomized his lack of distinction between public and private topics. The layout of the periodical itself made no such divisions, as a question regarding eschatology might be followed by one of natural history—writers asked at various times whether mermaids, chameleons, tarantulas, salamanders, and basilisks really existed—another of love or friendship, one of politics, and one of etiquette. In the thirteenth number of the *Mercury*, Dunton advertised that he welcomed letters from women, "our design being to answer all manner of Questions sent us by either Sex, that may be either useful to the publick or to particular Persons," the latter phrase gesturing toward the continuum from the mass to the individual that the paper addressed.[44] Although the periodical attempted to segregate women's letters into a monthly issue on "Love and Marriage," such topics were frequent in almost every paper, the authors included women's questions throughout, and they often forgot the special issue. As Dunton wrote in answer to the question, "*Whether it does not weaken the credit of the* Athenian Mercury, *that the Authors of it descend to such a pitiful Employment, as to take notice of Female Impertinencies?*": "We are troubled with Ten, perhaps a Hundred *Masculine Impertinencies* to one Feminine . . . [and] on the other side, we have Letters upon the File from Ladies, and those without the *boasted Advantages of Learning*, which are of so great concern, and carry so much Weight, that we dare not without considerable *Time* and *Thought* attempt their Answer."[45] Dunton depicted the space of the periodical as open to men's and women's letters. And although he claimed, in one instance, that a letter featured "a perfect *Womans Hand*," he was forced to add that it did "not appear feign'd," an assertion that implied its own objection and one that he could not prove in the medium of print.[46] The miscellaneous nature of the letter genre meant that, both tonally and materially, the period-

ical that relied on reader-supplied letters could not draw sharp lines around gendered forms of writing.

Instead of implying an attention to private topics, then, the bridge genre of the letter brought a focus on exchange, rather than individual authorship, to the periodical. Like the *London Gazette*—which Dunton sometimes cited as a source for answers to questions—the *Mercury* separated its text into paragraphs corresponding to individual letters, but it included much more discussion of its correspondence and details of the epistolary process. The role of the letter was to connect one writer (or a handful of co-writers) to circulation networks; that writer would then become part of the audience for any letter written in response. Readers following the twice-weekly *Mercury*—issued on the post days of Tuesday and Saturday—could expect to see topics continued, expanded, corrected, or otherwise amended from one number to another, and they were constantly given instructions on how to ask questions or send in corrections and advice to the authors: "If at any time the Answer is not so satisfactory as they could wish, let them . . . mention in what particular, and they shall have a fuller satisfaction in the next Paper . . . if they send their Questions by a Penny Post letter to Mr. Smith at his Coffee-house in Stocks Market in the Poultry."[47] While there is no known cache of letters sent to the *Mercury* to prove actual reader feedback, as exists in the case of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, the authors' constant references to incoming letters, and their requests to readers not to re-send letters or ask previously answered questions, indicate a popular response.

Because the process of writing and receiving letters was so central to the printed periodical's mission, epistolary topics soon came to comprise a significant chunk of its content. The *Mercury*, like any letter, featured constant and sudden shifts from topic to topic—the fourth number, of April 4, 1691, began with the question "Whether there is a Vacuum?" followed by "What is the cause of Titillation?" (meaning tickling), "Why doth the Hair and Nails of dead People grow?" and finally "What sort of Government is the best?"[48]—but there was a steady stream of interest in the publication itself, the letters it received, the people who sent them, and the timeliness with which the authors responded to readers. In the first issue, of March 17, 1691, readers were told to expect the "Resolution" of their questions "by the next Weekly Paper after their sending."[49] By the third number two weeks later, the authors noted that "the Questions grow so fast upon us, among which are several Duplicates with Complaints of their not being yet answered," that they had decided to increase the publication schedule to twice a week.[50] On April 11, correspon-

dents were asked to hold off on sending more questions until the current backlog had been addressed, and the authors claimed in the preface to the second volume, just two months after beginning the project, that they had received more than 4,000 questions.[51] This theme of an overworked Athenian Society continued for months: in September 1691 they appealed, "We must earnestly desire all persons whom it may concern, to hold their *Hands* and *Pens*, and let us take *Breath a while*, and get rid of those CART-LOADS of *Questions* which are yet upon the File, and are likely to press us to death under their weight."[52]

However, the paper's author-editors were unequivocal about the debt they owed to their "Querists" in supplying content. The device was ideal not only because it was, in Dunton's words, "surprising and unthought-of," but also because it provided easy copy.[53] In the preface to the first volume Sault and Wesley wrote, "Those concerned in the Composition . . . are not very ambitious to the name of Authors."[54] The Athenians deferred to readers and cited their sources, naming Aristotle, Descartes, Boyle, and the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* as authorities. They acknowledged the benefits of the epistolary genre, writing in December 1691, "'Tis to Us much easier to write the Volume than the Preface, because half of one is supply'd to our Hands, but all the other must be pure Invention."[55] But they faced reader critique that their periodical read too much like a commonplace book; as one querist asked in July 1691, *"Why [do] you pretend to such strange things, and yet in effect tell the World nothing but what we all know already?"* Dunton's response: "What one may know, another does not, and diffusing knowledge is a sort of improving it, perhaps the best way."[56] The best defense of his design was to "diffuse" knowledge and authority through a community of readers and writers. The "epistolary pact" of the *Athenian Mercury* meant that any reader was also potentially a correspondent: "To read the periodical was, at least theoretically, to be empowered to write, thus to assume complicity in the production of the text."[57] But while Dunton disclaimed authorship, he jealously guarded the question-and-answer format of the work and attacked those—including, as we shall see, Daniel Defoe—who "interloped" upon his terrain.

The basic structure of the *Mercury*, then, was one of correspondence—it was just that one half of the correspondence occurred in print. The publication attempted to follow the rules of reciprocity and exchange that held for personal letter writing; the authors apologized for not answering questions in a timely manner and reassured correspondents who complained about unanswered questions that their letters had not gone astray. As the periodical con-

tinued, Dunton represented his role as one of duty rather than profit or pleasure; as he wrote in answer to the question, "*Why do you trouble your selves and the World with answering so many silly Questions?,*" "Because the World will trouble us, and never let us or Mr. Smith the Coffee-man alone, unless we'll give 'em an Answer."[58] Archival evidence shows that Dunton occasionally responded personally to individual *Mercury* correspondents,[59] and in at least one case he "forwarded" a letter to another printer with instructions added on the cover: "This Letter . . . set just as 'tis spelt."[60] In the periodical, the authors sometimes noted the receipt of a new letter from a writer whose handwriting they recognized; they wrote of one in 1693, "We have receiv'd many Letters before from the same Person, in the same Hand, and the same *Stile* and *Sence*," and of another (or perhaps the same) in 1695, "*Our old acquaintance* come again (if we don't mistake his Hand)."[61] The *Mercury* addressed a coherent body of readers who were expected to respond in writing, and its printed letters served as ongoing evidence of the reading community the periodical had brought into being.

But while the epistolary call of the *Athenian Mercury* made it theoretically open to any correspondent, in practice Dunton expected his papers to circulate in a London media environment and his content to emerge from it. Through references to Smith's coffeehouse and the Raven bookshop, and instructions to correspondents to use the Penny Post for communication, Dunton located himself within a local world of printers, booksellers, coffeehouse newsmongers, gazetteers, hack writers, and hawkers. In response to the question, "*Can you tell us what good was ever yet done by your* Athenian Mercury?," he answered, "Since we have set the World a *talking*, they have fallen a writing too, and many a *good piece* has bin *publish'd*, which otherwise probably had hardly ever seen the *Light*."[62] "The world" comprehended both the personal epistolary relationships that Dunton fostered and the printed publication that concealed identifying information. His depiction of his own location within this sphere occupied shifting points from the individual to the communal: he used his own and his friends' letters as "proof" or "testimony" of individual intention and action, but published unknown readers' letters on grand-scale topics such as the origins of society and the proper pursuit of war. Although he claimed the "sole Right and Property" in the question-and-answer genre, he insisted that the *Mercury* was written by a society and never signed his name to the paper. Even as he upheld a fierce claim to originality and innovation, his reliance on the letter genre undercut his title to his own publications.

These paradoxical impulses may help explain why he was unable to keep up with the print marketplace as tastes apparently shifted toward a more codified, hierarchical relation between readers and producers. In 1710, when he was attempting to reclaim a measure of success, his correspondent "JW" advised him, "If you have Essays or Letters that are valuable, call 'em Essays & Letters in short and plain language," but added, "Such Titles as Athenian Phoenix . . . are so senseless & impertinent that 'twould spoil the credit of any author that should use them."[63] Indeed, Dunton seems to have been unable to cope with the overall surge in competition occasioned by the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695, as after that date the *Mercury* rapidly declined before folding in 1697.[64] While he tried to continue capitalizing on the paper's reputation, signing books "by a member of the Athenian Society," he never recaptured the *Mercury*'s influence and spent his later years ineffectually ranting against his former colleagues in hundreds of pages of memoirs.

It is in these texts that Defoe, known at the time as a political hack writer, repeatedly appears.[65] One of Defoe's first published poems was titled "To the Athenian Society" and appeared, attributed to "D.F.," among other dedicatory poems at the opening of Charles Gildon's commissioned *History of the Athenian Society* (1692). In his memoirs, Dunton praised Defoe as "a Man of good Parts, and very clear sense," but added that he suffered from "not only the ITCH and Inclination, but the *Necessity* of writing." As Dunton wrote of Defoe, "This Man has done me a sensible Wrong, by Interloping with my *Question-Project*."[66] His attacks stemmed again from the question of literary property; as Dunton wrote, "To this (sneaking) Injustice of *Interloping*, Foe has added that of *Reprinting a Copy* he gave me," which Dunton saw as a usurpation of his rights as a printer.[67] Dunton blamed Defoe for adopting the question-and-answer genre in his periodical the *Review*, but Defoe was far from the only author to use the device, which began to appear across periodicals.[68] In the experimental literary environment of the early eighteenth century, Dunton—who advocated for reinstatement of the Licensing Act—was unable to maintain his "literary property." His innovation became a transportable genre divorced from its progenitor's mercurial temperament.

## Authenticity and Authority in Defoe's Print Periodicals

The epistolary affordances that Dunton took advantage of to launch the reader-interactive periodical became standard in the surge of periodical publishing that followed the lapse of the Licensing Act; they would prove particularly generative as his foil, Defoe, branched from political satire and pamphleteer-

ing into news, true narrative, and ultimately fiction. Defoe hardly seemed to be in a position to take Dunton's place as the great experimentalist of the London periodical press in late 1703, when he was languishing indefinitely in Newgate Prison for authoring his "seditious libel," *The Shortest-Way with the Dissenters*. Unable to pay the fine imposed as punishment for the satirical pamphlet, Defoe in November was suddenly released thanks to the intervention of powerful Tory minister Robert Harley, for whom the author would go to work as a government agent and propagandist.[69] But just a few days after Defoe left prison, the Great Storm struck. Cutting into central England from the North Atlantic, the hurricane killed 8,000 people, including more than a fifth of the sailors onboard the royal fleet, and damaged innumerable buildings and ships, with London and Bristol especially battered.[70] Walking the debris-strewn streets of London in the following days, Defoe saw both necessity and opportunity: the storm was not only a freak meteorological occurrence, but also, and perhaps more importantly, a news event. Across the country, people had experienced the hurricane as individuals undergoing a collective experience. Their disparate stories added up to a persuasive and moving narrative of calamity and perseverance. The remarkably similar accounts in circulation—of roof tiles flying through the air, church spires torn from steeples, 100-year-old trees uprooted, and people miraculously pulled from piles of bricks—both provided local detail and confirmed the severity of the event for the nation as a whole. The communal shock of "the Greatest and the Longest Storm that ever the World saw"[71] seemed to call for some kind of reportage: the production of the archetypal first rough draft of history.

To capture this interplay of collective and individual experience, Defoe turned to a genre that had already established methods to weave separate stories into a common narrative: the newspaper. Five days after the end of the storm, Defoe placed advertisements in two London papers, the *Daily Courant* and the *Gazette*,[72] in which he announced his intention to "preserve the Remembrance of the late Dreadful Tempest" with an "exact and faithful Collection" of stories of the event. Those who had experienced the storm were asked to "transmit as distinct an Account as possible, of what they have observed."[73] Along with his own narration, selections from scientific treatises, and sermons dating from before and after the hurricane, Defoe culled about 70 of the letters he received into his first continuous book-length work, *The Storm: or, A Collection of the Most Remarkable Casualties and Disasters which Happen'd in the Late Dreadful Tempest, Both by Sea and by Land*, published in 1704. *The Storm* married the innovations of epistolary periodical publication

to the status of the codex format. In doing so, it helped to propagate what would become the mode of modern newsgathering—collected eyewitness accounts of large-scale events such as fires, plagues, and storms—simply by requesting testimony in the form of letters. As Defoe wrote in the preface, the purpose of "the Method, which may be a little unusual, of Printing Letters from the Country in their own Stile" was "to keep close to the Truth, and hand my Relation with the true Authorities from whence I receiv'd it."[74] To that end, he published the letters with their authors' names and locations affixed, occasionally including information about the writer's status in his or her community. The publication of personal letters expanded the scope of the correspondence so that the book itself could be directed to any potential reader.

Defoe was already a well-known member of the London publishing community, with connections to a number of periodicals. While preparing *The Storm*, he was also beginning work on *A Review of the Affairs of France*, commonly known then and now as the *Review*, the periodical that would raise Dunton's ire for its adoption of the question-and-answer format. The first issue of the *Review* appeared in February 1704, a few months before the publication of *The Storm*. The paper, which ran until 1713 under the single authorship of Defoe, began as a survey of the relationship between Britain and France and of ongoing political and military tensions across Europe, but soon transitioned to general-interest essays on topics such as finance, commerce, party politics, and diplomacy; in 1706, the title changed to *A Review of the State of the English Nation*.[75] Regardless of Dunton's plagiarism charges, Defoe varied the *Athenian Mercury* model in the *Review*. He used readers' letters not as the main text but as a supplement, or, as he wrote, a "little Diversion" "at the end of every Paper."[76] Not all of the letters to the *Review*'s "Scandalous Club" required specific answers; many were commentaries on the *Review* or other periodicals, while others discussed public affairs or readers' remarks in earlier numbers. That is, the letters in the *Review* functioned much more like present-day letters to the editor than like the "Dear Abby" style of the *Athenian Mercury*. As is common with letters to the editor, Defoe dispensed with them when space demanded.[77] While presenting his work as a history-in-parts, he shifted to essayistic opinion writing, subordinating reader response to his own polemical articles on politics, finance, and culture: "He was there to argue about the events of the time—to satirize the wrong view and to assure his readers that his interpretation of events was the proper one."[78] By altering Dunton's question-and-answer format, Defoe moved the periodical

toward a model in which a central eidolon would monitor and coordinate the reading experience.

Defoe's periodicals, with which he was associated throughout his authorial career (although present-day readers tend to be more familiar with his later fiction), included extensive reflections on his own and other news writers' use of the letter genre. From the beginning to the end of his career and in works of poetry, news, and fiction, he dwelled on the material circumstances of writing to "the world" in the early eighteenth century. In doing so, he developed a media-centric interest in fact, proof, and authority that laid the groundwork for later associations of print with fixity and truth and of manuscript with ephemerality and rumor. But even as his writing normatively contrasted the reliability of print with the instability of manuscript, in practice he positioned letters as proof of his printed assertions, delegating authority to the handwritten "original." By reading the *Review* alongside *The Storm*, we can better understand how Defoe used reader correspondence not merely to claim a (perhaps spurious) factuality, but also, and more broadly, to work through the oscillating relationship between manuscript and print as media of authority. Ultimately, it was in a typically early eighteenth-century combination of print and manuscript that he located authority and authenticity. In this case, the bridging function of the letter was to connect readers to the modes of interpersonal verification that writing, receiving, and reading letters entailed. Letters were already documents that frequently included a high degree of attention to the processes of mediated communication, and Defoe highlighted this aspect when transferring letters to print.

In both the *Review* and *The Storm*—written while he was still legally enjoined from publishing following his imprisonment[79]—Defoe extended the function of the letter as a bridge genre. Each work displays an obsession with the contemporary print marketplace; the content addresses the means by which authors reported on European politics or the Great Storm as much as these topics themselves. While Defoe, unlike Dunton, rarely mentioned his rival by name, he appears to have been self-conscious about potential comparisons; in the preface to the collected edition of the *Review*'s first volume, he noted that "receiving or Answering Letters of Doubts, Difficulties, Cases and Questions . . . was the remotest thing from my first Design of any thing in the World."[80] He did, however, continually critique the best-known newspapers of the new century, not by claiming ownership in the periodical genre but by claiming competency in its conventions—one of which was the use of letters.

Part of almost every *Review of the Affairs of France* was taken up with a commentary on the "Errors and Nonsense of our News-Writers," with a separate section—initially called "Mercure Scandale: or, Advice from the Scandalous Club"—set aside at the end of each paper to answer questions and critique rivals.[81] This was the section most directly concerned with "the world," as Defoe presented it: "As any thing occurs to make the World Merry, and whether Friend or Foe, one Party or another, if any thing happens so scandalous, as to require an open Reproof, the World may meet with it there."[82] Defoe gave an example of newspapers' "Absurdities and Contradictions" in the first issue, as he appraised "*The London Post* of the 21st of *August* last, where in Advice from the *Hague*, by way of *Lisbon*, we are acquainted with some News from *Paris*. . . . This is just as Direct an Intelligence, as if they shou'd say, *There are Letters from* Jamaica*, by the last* East India *Ship, which give a more particular Account of a great Fight in* Flanders."[83] A few weeks later, Defoe charged the author of *The Post-Man* with "filling up his Papers with long Harangues of his own, and making News for us when the Posts were not come in to supply."[84] That is, while other authors only pretended to have letters to authenticate their news, Defoe repeatedly promised to leave the "originals" of the letters he received with his printer, "for any Person to peruse that doubts the Truth of them."[85] This was the more necessary in a "publick print," he noted, as "I cannot satisfie my self to say any thing in Print, without either being very sure of my Authorities, or letting the World know upon what Foot, as to Credit, they are to take it."[86] "Credit" and "Authority" derived from the letter, the manuscript backup to Defoe's printed assertions.

As in the *Review*, where Defoe affirmed communal authorship by denying that he was the author of his printed letters, in *The Storm* he repeatedly asserted the material existence of the correspondence. As had Dunton before him, Defoe deflected his authorial position, calling himself the "Editor" or "Compiler" and writing that he gave "the World the Particulars from [his correspondents'] own Mouths, and under their own Hands."[87] "I am perswaded," he wrote of the letters, that "they are all dress'd in the desirable, though unfashionable Garb of Truth, and I doubt not but Posterity will read them with Pleasure."[88] More than the *London Gazette*, *Athenian Mercury*, or *Review*, *The Storm* deployed the form of the letter, laying out pages of missives proceeding from salutation to subscription, and in the process implying that the "editor" had not altered the letters he received in the mail. But while Defoe insisted that the epistolary, handwritten source of the work's content vouchsafed its

authenticity, the letters' remediation into print created concerns as well. Large portions of the book were taken up with asserting and explaining the truth of his narrative and in particular with exploring the role that print could play in creating a factual record. He established a hierarchy of scale in the first line of the work, writing, "Preaching of Sermons is Speaking to a few of Mankind: Printing of Books is Talking to the whole World." He continued: "If a Book Printed obtrudes a Falsehood, if a Man tells a Lye in Print, he abuses Mankind, and imposes upon the whole World, he causes our Children to tell Lyes after us, and their Children after them, to the End of the World."[89] Print publication, he argued, placed more rigorous requirements on the author and historian than did speech or manuscript: "Where a Story is vouch'd to him with sufficient authority, he ought to give the World the Special Testimonial of its proper Voucher."[90] In *The Storm*, that voucher is the handwritten letter, amplified and given additional authority, but also complicated and perhaps subverted, by the medium of print.

Placed side by side in the book, the uniformity of details provided by Defoe's correspondents—who describe people buried beneath collapsing chimneys, roofs rolled up like sheets of paper, tiles floating through the air, and trees flattened by the hundreds—both confirms the severity of the events and raises questions as to how heavy the hand of the "editor" was in composing the narrative. The most obviously fictional letter in *The Storm* reveals the difficulty of maintaining an editorial stance, anticipating Richardson's similar convolutions when explaining his relationship to *Pamela* and *Clarissa*. A letter from a sailor on board a sinking ship, it is the only one in the book that Defoe as editor admits is "not litterally True," a phrase that appears oxymoronic. However, Defoe asserts an existential rather than literal truth, adding, "I have inserted this Letter, because it seems to describe the Horror and Consternation the poor Sailors were in at that time. And because this is Written from one, who was as near an Eye Witness as any could possibly be, and be safe."[91] Unlike any other letter in *The Storm*, this one deploys a rudimentary version of "writing to the moment" as the sailor describes his current lamentable position: "We are all left here in a dismal Condition, expecting every moment to be all drowned: For here is a great Storm, and is very likely to continue; . . . we lye here in great danger."[92] The letter acts as a prototype for Defoe's later fictional narrators, who will move through their not-literally-true stories against the backdrop of actual historical events. Despite Defoe's assurances of the physical existence of the letters and their authors, the genre

of the printed letter allowed him to open up a fictional space and to begin to experiment with ways to document the relationship between the individual and society that did not require "literal" truth.

The *Review* and *The Storm* were thus caught in an ambivalent pose, alternately asserting the primacy of printed or handwritten evidence; that is, of the published book or its epistolary foundation. Paula McDowell has focused on one of Defoe's later works, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1724), to argue that the author downplayed the reliability of oral news and rumor and contributed to an emergent eighteenth-century "model of a hierarchy of forms of communication with print at its apex."[93] This model allowed Defoe to claim authority as the author of a printed book. It is certainly true that Defoe, in these two earlier works, contrasted the media of speech and print, but in these early statements of his media sensibility he located the primacy of printing not in its inherent reliability but in its ability to reach a larger audience. The greater scope of printing—"talking to the whole World"—imparted a greater burden upon the author, who at the same time found himself questioning the trustworthiness of printed texts.

In an April 1704 issue of the *Review*, for example, Defoe seemed defensive about his choice of medium, excusing, "the meanness of the manner, and the Work of Writing a Peny Paper, which as it is only writing a History sheet by sheet, and *letting the World see it as I go on*, does no way lessen the real Value of the Design, however low such a step may seem to be."[94] In June 1704, he complained about the limitations of his "half Sheet of Paper," writing, "The Impatient World cannot refrain their Conclusions, before I am come to mine. This I find is the effect of Writing a History by Inches; Mankind expects every piece should be entire, and bear a reading by it self."[95] The practice of periodical publication, which he called a "new thing," frustrated Defoe by eliciting readers' letters that criticized the work before seeing the end result (a seemingly disingenuous or petty complaint given that the periodical continued for nine years). While he sometimes contrasted print, manuscript, and speech as media of communication, he also tended to conflate or overlap the three, metaphorically describing both writing and printing as "talking" or "speaking." This media-mixing tendency was evident in the preface to *The Storm*, discussed above, as well in the first volume of the *Review*, where he wrote, "When Authors present their Works to the World, like a Thief at the Gallows; they make a Speech to the People."[96] He tended to locate proof not in a hierarchy of media but in their simultaneous deployment, so that a printed book was made up manuscript letters, and both could be described as a form of

speech. Often, Defoe indicated, it was the combination of speaking, writing, and printing that lent his work its greatest authority. His analysis modeled media as existing on a continuum rather than as mutually opposed alternatives.

Of course, "authority" has long been flagged as an especially slippery concept in Defoe's career.[97] Whether in his newswriting, pamphleteering, poetry, or fiction, he employed layers of authorial personae, frame narratives, contradictory truth claims, and quotations from external sources. While Defoe subtitled the *Review* "Historical Observations, on the Publick Transactions of the WORLD; Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of *News-Writers*, and *Petty-Statesmen* of all Sides," and answered a later charge of Jacobitism by defending his paper, "That pursuant to the first Design, I can yet hear no body contradict it, as to Truth of Fact, or charge me with Falshood and Partiality,"[98] he in fact wrote the paper while employed by Robert Harley and was "willing to write what Harley ordered."[99] At the same time as he was authoring the supposedly impartial *Review*, which dedicated copious space to discussing the proposed union between England and Scotland, he went to Scotland at Harley's behest to agitate for union and spy on opponents. In addition, between 1716 and 1730 Defoe either ran or wrote for about a dozen separate newspapers and occasionally controlled Whig- and Tory-leaning periodicals at the same time.[100] His assertions of the factual truth of more fictional works such as *Robinson Crusoe* and *A Journal of the Plague Year* have also made critics skeptical of similar statements in works such as *The Storm* or the *Review.* An attention to questions of proof and evidence filtered through a media-sensitive vocabulary, and a desire to claim the truth of his own works at the expense of others', may be one of the most consistent features of Defoe's body of writing.

In the news reports of the early 1700s, Defoe affirmed "proof" by claiming the material existence of manuscript letters as the "originals" of the print periodical, as if the letters' reality were sufficient to prove the veracity of their claims. In the *Review*, he wrote that his tendency to distinguish between his own text and readers' letters was evidence of his sincerity: "The Author makes a plain distinction between Observations of his own, and such as are Receiv'd by Letters; signifying what he is sure of, and what from other Authorities; and is ready to produce the Authority."[101] In a later number, he affirmed that "he wrote nothing but what has fairly been Publisht as his own, and as he hopes he shall never write any thing that he shall either be afraid or asham'd to own; so what ever he writes for the future shall his Hand fairly set to it, that every body may know it, and wishes all Authors were oblig'd to do the like."[102] Despite the blatantly disingenuous nature of this assertion, Defoe here offered

the materiality of the "hand" writing the letter as proof of the text's factual existence and, more, of its epistemological authority. The epistolary metadiscourse of the early periodical, with its emphasis on secrecy and testimony—on the specific, perceived ability of the letter to bear witness to the truth—offered Defoe a vocabulary for expressing in writing his ongoing concern about the authentic relationship of the individual to society. In many ways, this is the signature task of journalism: placing individual stories within a large-scale narrative and marking the difference between the exceptional-but-true events that constitute "news" and unremarkable everyday reality. By relying on letters to structure and support his news writings, Defoe placed his works in the world of epistolary communication, one with which readers were increasingly familiar. He made the topics more legible and believable by situating them within the quotidian bureaucracy of the postal system. Defoe's use of letters in his early periodicals offered a method to prove through print, a function that was in need of explicit elaboration in the early eighteenth century. In his later novels, he used this baseline immersion in a mixed-media environment to reformulate genre definitions and the ways authors could differentiate between their own "true" stories and others' fables or romances. Individual letters could combine to make a coherent book; individual, episodic stories could transform into a unified narrative. His career shows a constant experimentation with the best ways to offer evidence in writing and to place distinct stories in a larger context.

Defoe was engaged in writing and receiving another series of letters during the years in which he published *The Storm* and the *Review*: his private correspondence as a government agent for Harley. As a political operative, he undertook several trips on Harley's orders, around England and to Scotland, and his sole means both to communicate with Harley and to transmit his *Review* manuscripts to his London printer was through the post.[103] The epistolary relationship began as soon as Harley intervened to have Defoe released from Newgate. In November 1703, in what Maximillian Novak calls "a kind of public document,"[104] Defoe wrote a formal letter to Harley, on a large sheet of paper and with nearly two-inch margins of white space at the top and left, thanking him for effecting his release and offering his services, "readyer by Farr to Perform than to Promise."[105] To demonstrate his gratitude, Defoe delivered information in the form of letters in an exchange that lasted for years. He also proposed what he called a "Scheme of General Intelligence," a nationwide epistolary network that would keep him informed of news, which he could then pass on to Harley. As he wrote of his planned trip around England,

"Correspondence may be effectually settled with every Part of England, and all the World beside . . . I firmly believ this Journey may be the foundation of such an Intelligence as never was in England."[106] Harley found a use for Defoe not primarily as a propagandist in the print realm—although Defoe did write pamphlets and issues of the *Review* at Harley's direction, he also continued to publish from a wide array of political perspectives[107]—but rather as his foreign and domestic correspondent.

But these letters again left Defoe with the question of proof—how to prove to Harley that he was sincerely repentant and grateful and that he sent accurate intelligence—and he again answered it by recourse to the materiality of the letter. While the appearance of the early letters corresponded to their content in formality, with regular handwriting and generous white space, the letters became more casual until Defoe was sending his patron scribbled notes of conversations he had overheard in coffeehouses. One anomalous letter, sent from Scotland in September 1707, suddenly returned to the formal layout of the earlier epistles. Defoe had grown desperate at not hearing from Harley in five months and had to beg for money and instructions on whether to return to England. He used the trope of speech to appeal to his patron, writing, "You have Allways Allow'd me The Freedome of a plain and Direct Stateing things to you. . . . If I were where I hav had the honor to be Sir in yor Parlour, Telling you my Own case, and what a Posture my Affaires are in here, it would be too moveing a story."[108] The conventional language and layout of the letter served as a stand-in for Defoe, one that he hoped could most effectively convey his dire need in the absence of in-person speech with Harley. Plaintively, Defoe noted at the end of the epistle that men in Scotland "Do Not live here by Their Witts," so that "this is not a place to get Money in, Pen and Ink and Printing will Do Nothing here."[109] Shortly after Harley received this letter, he did send further funding to Defoe, who returned to London in late 1707.

In the manuscript correspondence with Harley, the printed letter-book of *The Storm*, and the epistolary reader dialogue of the *Review*, Defoe during the first decade of the eighteenth century displayed an evolving interest in describing the changing shape of "the World," a metonymic space comprising a European news community. "He that Prints and Publishes to all the World, has a tenfold Obligation," he announced in *The Storm*,[110] and he attempted to meet this obligation through a constant correspondence in both print and manuscript. But Defoe's journalism also registered a gap that print could not cover, whether it was the gap between the printed letter and its manuscript original—with irreproducible elements such as handwriting, postmarks, and

folding—or the gap between the letter and the speech in whose place it supposedly stood. His early journalistic works often expressed a sense of this abyss, which he tried to cover but in fact further revealed by stressing his sources' status as eyewitnesses of the events he was reporting. As author of *The Storm*, he described himself as an "Eye-witness and Sharer of the Particulars," and the "Testimony" of the letters came from those who were also "Eye-witnesses."[111] By reading the letters, the reader transformed into a kind of eyewitness, as the plain style of the prose conveyed its factual stance: "The Plainness and Honesty of the Story will plead for the Meanness of the Stile in many of the Letters, and the Reader cannot want Eyes to see what sort of People some of them come from."[112] But he also betrayed doubts about his ability to convey the "literal truth" of his facts and feelings to the reader. "No Pen can describe it, no Tongue can express it, no Thought conceive it, unless some of those who were in the Extremity of it," he wrote of the Great Storm, questioning the reliability of his printed book despite the apparent superfluity of "authentick Vouchers" in the form of letters.[113] Remarkably, he repeated this sentence almost verbatim in *Roxana* twenty years later; when Roxana reunites with her long-lost daughter, she writes, "No Pen can describe, no Words can express, *I say*, the strange Impression which this thing made upon my Spirits."[114] Defoe's early journalism used the bridge genre of the letter to forge a language for describing not only proof and truth, but also the failure of print to accurately depict and transmit.

## "The Known and Knowing World": Addison and Steele's Idealized Reader-Correspondent

By the end of Defoe's *Review*, the letters in periodicals were becoming increasingly established and conventionalized, an expected feature of a printed genre rather than an exciting new occasion for reciprocal communication in print. Manushag Powell has highlighted the role of the eidolon in the rise of the periodical, arguing that taking on a periodical voice involved complicated acts of self-commodification through writing, a key step in the eighteenth-century development of the narrated self.[115] The same was true of the letters through which readers offered themselves for publication and which were then claimed by authors as evidence of their own popularity—never more so than in the eighteenth century's most influential periodicals, the *Tatler* (1709–11) and the *Spectator* (1711–12, 1714). Scholars have often taken Steele and Addison's two co-productions as a starting point for examinations of the eighteenth-century expansion of professional journalism, print culture, and the public

sphere.[116] But while the hundreds of reader letters in these two titles have been widely, if not deeply, discussed, critics have viewed the correspondence primarily as either evidence or an idealized representation of the works' readership, not as a generic strategy. They have noted the letters' presence to bolster claims about the papers' popularity or their relationship to the "print public sphere" but have struggled to fully account for the complexities of both the letters and their authors. In part, this is because the readership is seen as either too open or too closed: either the "public sphere," in Habermasian terms, or the white male bourgeoisie, as feminist critiques of public-sphere theory have reformulated it.[117] However, the papers' ongoing discussions of the relationship of the author-editor to the reader-correspondent show that they were unable and, indeed, unconcerned to articulate clear categories of public and private audiences, or of factual and fictional texts. The *Tatler* and *Spectator* were consistently ambivalent about both the status of print and the border between reportorial and imaginative genres, and they continued to use the bridge genre of the letter as a means to reflect upon these developing arenas.

In the *Spectator* in July 1712, Steele issued one of his many calls for letters to print, inviting "all Persons who have anything to say for the profitable Information of the Publick, to take their Turns in my Paper." The value of letters lay in the very diversity of authors, promising "a great Harvest of new Circumstances, Persons, and Things from this Proposal; and a World, which many think they are well acquainted with, discovered as wholly new."[118] Later, in Steele's *Englishman*, the author explained the "great Success of a former Paper"—the *Spectator*—as "owing to this Particular: from the Plan of it, it lay open to receive the Sentiments of the rest of the World into it."[119] Even more explicitly than did Defoe, Addison and Steele described "the world" as the communicative sphere of London, and London as a microcosm of the world. The representative bodies of the city—the "publick places" at which Mr. Spectator is a silent observer, the coffeehouses where Bickerstaff tattles, the periodicals' tea-table ladies, fops, cits, coquettes, jilts, footmen, chambermaids, toasts, wits, pedants, newsmongers, and philosophers—were all united, as he likewise wrote in the *Tatler*, through a "Correspondence in all Parts of the Known and Knowing World."[120] Both the *Tatler* and *Spectator* paid close attention to documenting the different segments of this world: individual issues dealt with, for example, the "female world," the "learned world," the "gayer world," the "polite world," the "trading world," or the "politick world." They made clear that these sectors were like the different neighborhoods of London that together made up the city. The goal was to "leave the World much better than I

found it," and the fictionalized authors, Messrs. Bickerstaff and Spectator, offered the distance and authority to observe upon and unite worlds, letters, places, and people: "Thus I live in the World, rather as a Spectator of Mankind, than as one of the Species."[121] Readers' letters represented this world.

When Steele began the *Tatler* in 1709, he was emerging directly out of the London news world, as he had already spent two years editing the government-run *Gazette*.[122] Like many London tri-weeklies, the new periodical appeared on the post days of Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday in order to coordinate for mailing to the country. Steele presented the *Tatler* as an improvement upon the current newspapers in that it would include local reporting in addition to the foreign items to which he had easy access as the *Gazette*'s editor; the paper would offer not only "musty Foreign Edicts, or dull Proclamations," but also instructions on "what to think."[123] The miscellany layout stressed the combination of old and new genres within the familiar format of the half-sheet folio printed in columns on both sides. But in addition to instructing his readers in both how to read and what to think, Steele almost immediately began advertising his reliance on correspondence and publishing reader letters. He begged his audience to demonstrate support by sending letters, and praised one epistle—which commended the periodical's innovation of reporting from the coffeehouse—as "very explanatory of the true Design of our Lucubrations, and at the same time an excellent Model for performing it." As such, he continued, "it is absolutely necessary, for the better understanding of our Works, to publish it."[124] Addison, who began contributing to the *Tatler* toward the end of its run, likewise assumed that letters would provide material; in March 1710, he wrote to Steele, "I wish you had reserved the Letter in this days paper concerning Indecencies at Church for an Entire piece. It would have made as good a one as any you have published."[125] While scholars have generally attributed the *Spectator*'s epistolary issues to Steele, both authors took for granted the importance of letters in finding copy and formatting the text. Their role was to filter the letters through the unified Bickerstaffian-Spectatorial editorial function.[126]

Mr. Spectator's commentary on his own epistolary content established many of the key terms by which Addison and Steele asked readers and critics to evaluate their work. As Michael Warner writes, "Like Dunton's *Athenian Mercury*, but with a much richer formal vocabulary, the *Spectator* developed a reflexivity about its own circulation, coordinating its readers' relations to other readers."[127] Whig politicos who faced frequent accusations of writing the party line, Addison and Steele in many ways took up the mantle of the *Review* as

they argued that their papers would "observe an exact Neutrality between the Whigs and Tories."[128] They continued Defoe's attention to the London world, its fashions, entertainments, and media, and to activities such as gambling, dueling, and theatergoing—all major areas of concern in the *Review* as well as the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. They adopted the device, familiar since the *Athenian Mercury*, of a "club" or "society" responsible for the papers, in this case the Spectator Club, which followed on from Steele's use of datelines such as "Will's Coffee-house" and "White's Chocolate-house" in the *Tatler*. And both the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* featured hundreds of letters that the authors either responded to in a question-and-answer format or, more commonly, inserted as additional stand-alone material laid out in letter form. Like Defoe, then, they could be accused of "interloping" in the epistolary periodical genre.

But unlike Dunton and Defoe—and in a development that presaged the techniques of epistolary fiction in the mid-eighteenth century—Addison and Steele treated the letter more as a set of genre characteristics to be deployed for aesthetic and communicative purposes than as an authentic, material text. The variations they made on the letter's function in the periodical—principally, filtering the circulation of letters through the central figures of Isaac Bickerstaff and Mr. Spectator and defending the use of fictional letters—abstracted and idealized the roles of both writer and reader. More than half of all the issues of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* included letters from readers or sections written in the form of a letter, sometimes filling entire issues. Addison and Steele also described the papers themselves as "these Letters," "Letter[s] of News," or "Letters of Intelligence," and made frequent reference to "our Correspondents." Unlike in the earlier periodicals, however, the authors did not defer to the authority of readers or the physical existence of their letters. While asserting that many of their letters did arrive from unknown readers, they also frequently defended their practices of rewriting such letters, using readers' "hints" as the basis for issues, or passing off their own texts as letters from readers. As Steele wrote in *Spectator* No. 442, "I my self being the first Projector of this Paper, thought I had a Right to make [the letters] my own, by dressing them in my own Stile, by leaving out what wou'd not appear like mine, and by adding whatever might be proper to adapt them to the Character and Genius of my Paper."[129] Taking a nearly opposite stance from Dunton's and Defoe's descriptions of their reader letters, Steele and Addison asserted their authorial right to rewrite, edit, and fictionalize. And readers apparently accepted this newly second-class status: in May 1711, for example, Steele reproduced one letter writer's "full Commission . . . to do whatever you think

fit with" his correspondence.[130] The letter established Addison and Steele's authority, discursively subordinating manuscript to printed texts.

To see this dynamic at work, let us turn to *Spectator* 366, published on April 30, 1712. The paper, attributed to Steele, opens with a paragraph discussion of the appropriate way to represent love in writing before devoting the bulk of the number to two letters, the first a translation of and commentary on a "Lapland Love-Song" and the second a missive from a chambermaid. While the former hews to the kind of literary analysis often found in the *Spectator*, the latter could be at home in the *Athenian Mercury* or *Review*. In it, the maid asserts that she loves her mistress "as my Life" but complains that she is denied the "Perquisites" of her position, since her mistress "gives her cast-off Cloaths from me to others." The maid continues, "This, Sir, is a very mortifying Sight to me, who am a little necessitous for Cloaths, and loves to appear what I am, and causes an Uneasiness, so that I can't serve with that Chearfulness as formerly." The maid begs Mr. Spectator's advice and proclaims herself "fully resolved to follow your Counsel," signing the letter, "Your Admirer and humble Servant, Constantia Comb-brush." She then adds a postscript: "I beg that you would put it in a better Dress, and let it come abroad; that my Mistress, who is an Admirer of your Speculations, may see it." This line closes the issue: there is no response from Steele. Rather than offering his own opinion on this conventional aspect of the maid-mistress relationship, thereby engaging in dialogue with the writer, he simply prints the letter as an object of interest and entertainment for readers. In some ways, however, this answers the maid's call, as the very printing of the letter may influence her employer. In a missive concerned with dresses—her mistress's old clothes—her deferential request that Mr. Spectator put her words "in a better Dress" allows the letter to take on the genteel, bourgeois aspect to which the maid herself aspires. While refusing to adjudicate the conflict, the paper offers a model of self-advancement through writing, as the maid brings her complaints before the tribunal of the public. It gives voice to this lower-class reader and circulates her critique of her mistress without validating that critique, turning the maid from a real person with real concerns into a character with an allegorical, Restoration-comedy name. Without an answer from Mr. Spectator, the letter asks readers to answer the question for themselves, contributing to the *Spectator*'s project of moral and social reform and maintaining the periodical's ability to appropriate and authorize reader correspondence.

More than creating an interaction with interested readers, therefore, printed letters offered a means for Addison and Steele to elucidate their own authorial

project and larger trends within the print marketplace. Addison noted the somewhat contradictory benefits of the correspondence when he described the "double Advantage" of readers' letters: "First, as they shew me which of my Papers are most acceptable to [my readers]; and in the next Place, as they furnish me with Materials for new Speculations."[131] This feedback loop served as proof of Mr. Spectator's centrality to the literary scene: Steele wrote a few months into the publication, "When I acquaint my Reader that I have many other Letters not yet acknowledged, I believe he will own, what I have a mind he should believe, that I have no small Charge upon me, but am a Person of some Consequence in this World."[132] The periodical's role was to authorize these contributions with the imprimatur of Bickerstaff's or Mr. Spectator's approval: as Steele wrote while thanking his contributors, "As these Excellent Performances would not have seen the Light without the means of this Paper, I may still arrogate to my self the Merit of their being communicated to the Publick."[133] By asserting both their dependence on readers and their right to control and co-opt reader correspondence, Addison and Steele privileged the author as the filter for the epistolary network that made up "the world." Instead of referring to actual pieces of paper and individual correspondents, letters served an increasingly metonymic function.

In these ways, the *Tatler* and *Spectator* took the trends of Defoe's *Review* and other early eighteenth-century periodicals and reorganized the epistolary content to both foreground and fictionalize the reading community. In each paper, the reader took center stage as a content producer, but in an increasingly idealized manner. Like the members of the "clubs" of which Bickerstaff and Mr. Spectator are members, the readers who responded in letter form were not put forward as actual people but as quasi-allegorical figures from different segments of society. They signed their letters with pseudonyms in the periodicals' house style—Jeffry Nicknack, John Careless, Charles Sturdy, Martha Tatler, Rosalinda, Philo-Britannicus—and they offered themselves as representative of their class. The letters hewed to the papers' typical voice, elevating the correspondents to co-author status. Indeed, Steele early in the *Tatler* called for readers to send him "Assistance" in the form of letters since on his own, he wrote, "I have not a Month's Wit more"; the first number of the *Spectator* also ended with an address to which "those who have a mind to correspond with me" could direct their letters.[134] But the printed letter did not reflect the bad handwriting, poor spelling, or aggressive critiques that surviving archival correspondence shows the authors often received in the mail. The roles of both writer and reader became more abstract as the function of

authorship was located in illustrative characters whose language aspired to a unified standard of taste.

The collection of manuscript correspondence sent to the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* now in the British Library reveals that the unified voice of the letters was not just the result of Addison and Steele's editing, but that readers also took on this voice themselves. They likewise used representative pseudonyms, such as "Thomas Sticktotruth" and "Unfortunate Dorinda," and offered their own complete *Spectator* essays furnished with Latin mottoes. They took up the favorite topics of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, such as dueling and lace petticoats, and they offered additions to the papers' catalogues of London personality types, such as a "Quaker Lady," a "Mushroom Knight," and the "Country Whyfflers or petty News Mongers."[135] As one correspondent wrote to the *Tatler*, "Perceiving the design and tendency of your deservedly admired paper is to reduce the Follies of the Town in general and Expose the apish airs or graces of Persons In particular I have presumed by way of Information to lay before you the following particle"—a description of two flirts.[136] The letters' material appearance also testified to the personal, manuscript nature of the correspondence. One writer, advertising his writing school, composed an ornate note with large flourishing letters and a spiral design enclosing his address—an excellent advertisement for a writing master, but one that could hardly be reproduced in print (figure 2.2). The readers seemed to assume but not expect that their epistles might be printed, and they conceived of their letters as personal correspondence with Isaac Bickerstaff or Mr. Spectator. As one wrote of his essay, "If with some alterations without any prejudice to your own reputation you can & do print it, it will be an obligation; but if it prove only a hint, it will be a satisfaction to Sir Your most obedient & most humble servant."[137] Stuart Sherman argues that the *Spectator*'s daily interactions in its readers' lives "cultivated a new correspondence with its readers, as both a communication (corresponding *with* them) and a mirroring (corresponding *to* them)."[138] Any reader was both a member of the mass of readers and an individual who could write back and become a Spectator him- or herself.

This ability to bridge the space between the individual and "the world," pursued largely through the publication of letters, marks one of the key attributes of the periodical genre in the early eighteenth century. While Addison and Steele asserted their own authorial priority, in practice the writer-editors and reader-correspondents were constantly changing position; as William Kinsley writes, "The roles of reader and writer become virtually indistinguish-

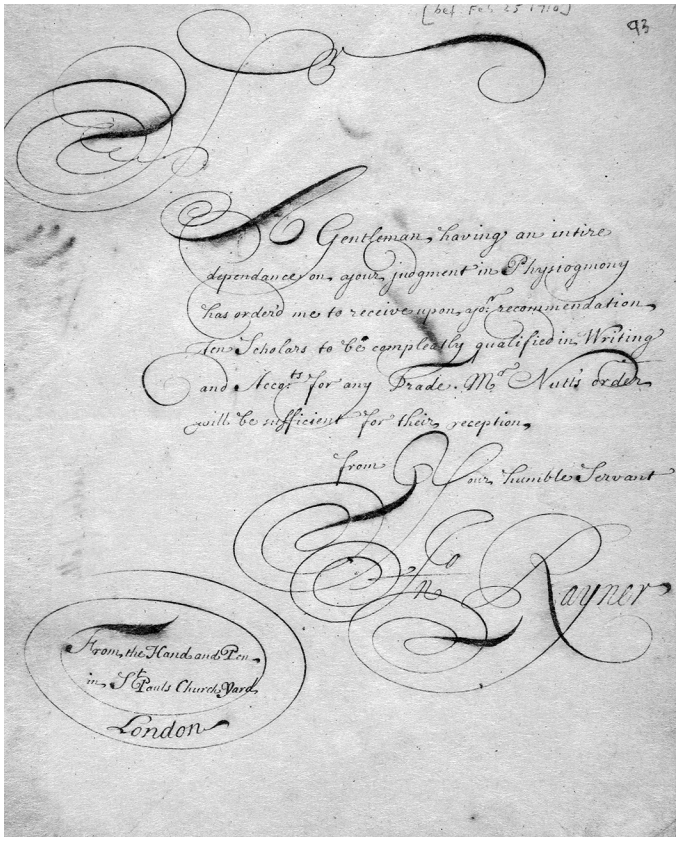

93
A Gentleman having an intire
dependance on your judgment in Physiognomy
has ordered me to receive upon your recommendation
ten Scholars to be compleatly qualified in Writing
and Accots for any Trade. Mr Nutts order
will be sufficient for their reception.
I am Sir Your humble Servant
To Mr Raymer
From the Hand and Pen
in St Pauls Church Yard
London

*Figure 2.2.* This letter from John Raymer to Steele, advertising a writing school, shows the types of irreproducible elements the periodicals' correspondents included in their letters. © The British Library Board. John Raymer to Richard Steele, before 25 February 1710, Add MS 61687, fol. 93, Correspondence and Papers of Sir Richard Steele, British Library, London.

able when Mr. Spectator discusses the ways he uses his readers' letters."[139] At times the letters reflected on the independence and integrity of the readers—"the Letters of my Correspondents will represent this Affair in a more lively manner than any Discourse of my own"; "My Correspondents take the Hint I give them, and pursue it into Speculations which I never thought of at my first starting it"[140]—but at others they demonstrated the superiority of the editor. The reader letters, as Mr. Spectator wrote of one note, "oblige[d] the World in general, and me in particular,"[141] a phrase that echoed Dunton's aspiration that the *Athenian Mercury* would be "either useful to the publick or to partic-

ular Persons." The emphasis on continual exchange that the letter genre transferred from manuscript to print goes a long way to explaining the curious tension between the private and public, the written and printed, and the authored and collated that was a factor throughout the emergence of the periodical genre.

Similarly, the definition of the "authentic" versus "fictional" letter remained in flux throughout the *Spectator.* While the authors occasionally insisted on the actual existence of the letters—calling them "genuine" and arguing that their presence testified to the papers' popularity—they also described the letters' fact-fiction status as almost irrelevant. What they analyzed as "the Licence allowable to a feigned Character" made a fictional letter, or the eidolon of Mr. Spectator, the best way to communicate with the public but did not, the authors asserted, call into question the truth of their observations.[142] In *Spectator* 542, Addison outlined five reasons for which he "often chuse[s] this way of casting my Thoughts into a Letter":

> First, out of the Policy of those who try their Jest upon another, before they own it themselves. Secondly, because I would extort a little Praise from such who will never applaud any thing whose Author is known and certain. Thirdly, because it gave me an Opportunity of introducing a great variety of Characters into my Work, which could not have been done, had I always written in the Person of the *Spectator*. Fourthly, because the Dignity Spectatorial would have suffered, had I published as from my self those several ludicrous Compositions which I have ascribed to fictitious Names and Characters. And lastly, because they often serve to bring in, more naturally, such additional Reflections as have been placed at the End of them.[143]

The complex, ambiguous genre of the letter allowed the authors to inhabit the many voices of "the world" even as they presented them all in the voice of Mr. Spectator. But the author of fiction, as Addison warned in his series on the pleasures of the imagination, must not stray too far from the truth; the poet "has the modeling of Nature in his own Hands, and may give her what Charms he pleases, provided he does not reform her too much, and run into Absurdities."[144] The use of fictional letters or fictional reader-correspondents was meant to smooth the circuit of communication from Spectator to reader and back again—not to defraud the reader with hype, propaganda, or inaccuracy. The genre of the letter enabled conversation in spoken, written, and printed forms; as Steele wrote, "It is much more difficult to converse with the World in a real than personated Character."[145]

Addison and Steele claimed the authority to censor, edit, or rewrite the letters because by printing they were "communicating them to the Publick." But the distinction between public and private letters was far from settled, and the authors throughout the papers' runs frequently referenced a world of overlapping oral, written, and printed media of communication in order to explain their authorial project. As Addison noted in *Spectator* No. 1, his eidolon turned to writing because, "since I have neither Time nor Inclination to communicate the Fulness of my Heart in Speech, I am resolved to do it in Writing; and to Print my self out, if possible, before I Die."[146] Printing enabled a level of communication at a greater order of magnitude than speech, but both were mediated by the "conversation" of manuscript letters. But like Defoe, the authors worried about the genre expectations of periodical readers: as Addison wrote, "Those who publish their Thoughts in distinct Sheets, and as it were by Piece-meal, . . . must immediately fall into our Subject, and treat every part of it in a lively Manner, or our Papers are thrown by as dull and insipid."[147] He also complained of or apologized for the low quality of the whitey-brown paper on which his speculations appeared and jokingly noted the uses to which "my Paper, after it is thus Printed and Published" could be put: "I have lighted my Pipe with my own Works for this Twelve-month past: My Landlady often sends up her little Daughter to desire some of my old *Spectators*, and has frequently told me, that the Paper they are printed on is the best in the World to wrap Spice in."[148] Both print and manuscript remained susceptible material forms, with neither seen as permanent and static. Addison and Steele's works used the bridge genre of the letter to enhance the value and influence of their printed writings, integrating the personal epistolary circle into the realm of print. But in the early eighteenth-century periodical market it was still difficult to assume the inherent preeminence of printed papers over written letters, or of the author figure over the correspondents who had a central position in the creation of his paper.

## Conclusion

As the role of print in the production and circulation of texts continued to expand in the early eighteenth century, the metadiscursive epistolarity of the first periodicals helped to initiate the hierarchies and distinctions that would solidify into the fact-fiction and print-manuscript binaries with which we are familiar. Authors began to refine a definition of the letter as a private, individual document that could bear witness to inner truth even as, paradoxically, letters in print and manuscript continued to serve as primary vehicles for the

discussion of politics, religion, and intellectual life. Early periodicals' overt attention to their own use of letters led to nascent theorizations of precisely the pervasive modern divisions—public and private, factual and fictional, printed and written, masculine and feminine—that scholars have seen as central to the eighteenth century.[149] While these categories were in such embryonic form as to be often indistinguishable, they also proved to be topics of concern and confusion for periodical writers. The periodicals exhibited many moments when these incipient binaries were relevant—as, for example, when authors contrasted their works with manuscript letters or argued that their first responsibility was to "the publick"—but many more when they were not or when the distinctions were so murky as to prove confounding to the modern reader. The terms of debate, frequently linked to the use of letters to create and circulate texts, functioned in the complex, continuous, and interactive forms that were symptomatic of eighteenth-century epistemology.

The first general-interest periodicals appeared at a crucial moment of flux in the literary marketplace. Mark Rose argues that the shift from licensing to copyright was one from a "regime of regulation" to a "regime of property" in which the author was established as the sole creator of a text. But the 1710 Statute of Anne appeared at an early moment for this "specifically modern" view of authorship, and "in the first decade of the eighteenth century the conception of the author as proprietor was still in an early phase of development"[150]—a point emphasized by Dunton's attempt to claim ownership over a genre rather than a copy. For Dunton, attention to epistolary discourse and media of communication brought to the fore questions of authorship, originality, and literary property. For Defoe, it led to concerns with proof, truth, and authenticity, and with the emerging distinction between factual and fictional genres. And for Addison and Steele, the discussion of media turned on the makeup of the individual reader in relation to the reading "world." These authors, I contend, were negotiating a transition from a circumscribed literary sphere wherein the authority of a book derived from its writer's reputation, to a literary market flooded by anonymous books and requiring new methods of credentialing. Each dealt with this unstable literary environment by highlighting his paper's epistolary makeup.

As we have seen, each of these periodicals included multiple contributors, styled itself as originating from a "club" of author-editors, and advertised its reliance on reader correspondence. But they did not present identical models of authorship. Over a 15-year period, from the beginning of the *Athenian Mercury* to the close of the *Spectator*—the first generation of the periodical

genre, we might say—we can see a shift from a responsive, agonistic, nearly equal author-audience relationship to one in which reader letters were prominent but subordinated in substance, structure, and style to the direction of the fictionalized author figure. The *Spectator* was so successful at highlighting this new epistolary role that it ultimately obscured earlier periodicals' use of letters, which scholars have seen as private, proto-fictional devices rather than as evidence of ongoing media shift and genre creation. Like the nineteenth-century New London Bridge, which replaced the historic structure with the bland span that now lives in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, the *Spectator* in many ways erased layers of arches and edifices—the networks of writers and readers that constituted periodicals including the *Athenian Mercury*, the *Review*, *The Storm*, and even the *Tatler*. But by digging into the genre's foundations, we can see the intricate negotiations between essays and newspapers, readers and correspondents, and writing and print that formed an interactive, evolving media "world." The internal contradictions of the early eighteenth-century periodical market—as authors worked to both privilege their own print productions and lend them authority and authenticity through reference to handwritten letters and oral conversation—mark the beginning of a more schematic genre and media hierarchy.

# Open Letters

## Personal Politics in the Epistolary Novel

The heterogeneous early eighteenth-century letter was at home in the pages of the periodical, which presented as its essential characteristics mixture, variation, and multiplicity. But as the letter continued to traverse the realm of print, inspiring growing reflection on the bridge genre itself, writers attempted to codify and confine it—although such efforts tended to involve linguistic convolutions. In particular, over the middle decades of the century the letter acquired an association with women writers and readers, a process that led critics to reimagine the history of the genre as always already feminine. In 1771, Dorothea Dubois wrote in the preface to her epistolary manual *The Lady's Polite Secretary, or New Female Letter Writer*, that "in every age, every nation, it has been a confessed maxim that women are born with talents peculiarly adapted for this path of literature—with a liveliness of imagination, and a facility of expression, unknown to the lords of the creation." However, Dubois admitted, there were currently few works on the "art of letter writing" directed to women, a niche her text sought to occupy.[1] This gap existed in part because women's letters were beneath instruction: as a 1760 pedagogical text written in epistolary form explained, polite letters should display "that easy, free, and familiar style, which is peculiarly adapted for female epistolary writing."[2] Departing from the traditional depiction of letter writing as an acquired skill central to the work of clerks, merchants, and diplomats, handbooks began to encourage a sentimental style.[3] While authors acknowledged that letters contained an array of public news, trade information, and political secrets, they represented such documents as exceptions to the conversational, feminine rule.

But the midcentury letter presented a tangle of contradictions to those who sought to redefine it as a domestic, female domain. Discussions of letter-writing norms in printed manuals and personal correspondence asserted women's affinity even as they mocked feminine penmanship and orthography, so that "women who wrote familiar letters were figures of epistolary contradiction, simultaneously lauded as 'naturally better' writers and disparaged as naturally disorderly."[4] Letter writing became a baseline skill that children

would encounter at a relatively early stage of education, and it was re-imagined as "the domain especially of young unmarried women."[5] In creating and disseminating rules for letter writing, the authors of epistolary and literacy manuals, as well as the periodicalists, critics, and novelists who turned their attention to the genre, were driven to explain the intermedial status of the familiar letter as it bridged writing and printing. As scholar and critic Hugh Blair wrote in 1783, "Epistolary Writing becomes a distinct species of Composition, subject to the cognizance of Criticism, only or chiefly, when it is of the easy and familiar kind; when it is conversation carried on upon paper, between two friends at a distance."[6] Moving from "conversation" to "composition," letters epitomized eighteenth-century interests in the relationships between speaking and writing, feeling and reason, appearance and dissimulation, nature and art.

This chapter interrogates the contradictions and consolidation of mid-eighteenth-century epistolary culture, reexamining a historical episode on which epistolary studies have traditionally dwelled: the breakout popularity of the epistolary novel in the form of Samuel Richardson's two bestsellers, *Pamela* (1740–41) and *Clarissa* (1748–49).[7] These works, emerging as they did out of Richardson's letter-writing manual, *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends, on the Most Important Occasions* (1741), exemplified many of the incongruous trends of midcentury letter writing. While exposing the artificiality of gendered writing conventions, they also established connections between gender and genre—between, that is, the letter, the novel, and the woman reader—that solidified in the later eighteenth century, persisted until the twentieth, and remain in diluted form today.[8] These novels both drew on and reinforced the familiar letter's association with the body, so that the epistle came to be a metonym not only for "the world" but also for the individualized correspondent. In the hand that was a reflection of one's character, in the heart that the letter writer displayed, in the speech that the letter transmitted, and in the tears that evidenced an emotional response, feminized letters put the body on display even as they cloaked it in writing. The letter in these works stood for the isolated female protagonist, and the violation of her letters was tied to the potential violation of her body: "Epistolary novels make the assumption that when a woman allows a man into her consciousness and writes personal letters to him, sooner or later she will also open her body to him."[9] But Richardson's novels continued to present letter writing as interpersonal, communal, and exchange-oriented, as they emphasized the networked connections that subsumed semiliterate servants and rhetorical geniuses under

the same postal system. The works displayed an obsessive, ongoing interest in documenting the relationship of writing to speech and print, and in reflecting on their own conditions of production. The self-contradictory trope of the letter written "to the moment," viciously parodied in Henry Fielding's *Shamela*, is only the most obvious means by which Richardson's works undercut the ideal of the conversational, sentimental letter.

In *Clarissa*, Richardson responded to critics of *Pamela* by expanding the fictional correspondence network to offer multiple perspectives. But in doing so, he produced a slippage between a newish and consolidating definition of letters as private, personal, and unmediated access to the female letter writer, and the continuing fact of letters' constantly mediated existence within fully and quasi-public worlds of written and printed communication. Like the periodical writers explored in chapter 2, who realized the literary and commercial advantages of filtering reader letters through a central eidolon, Richardson's focus on epistolary texts prioritized an editorial position. Although most critics have taken his assertions in *Pamela, Clarissa*, and his final novel, *Sir Charles Grandison,* that he is the works' editor rather than author as merely a convenient literary pose, in each novel the editor occupies a privileged role inside and outside the text. While individual characters experience gaps in consciousness and understanding—for example, Clarissa argues that she cannot tell her own story because she is unaware of crucial details such as the precise events of the rape—it is the "editor," Belford, who organizes the letters and arranges for them to be "published to the whole world," and the "editor," Richardson, who presents them to the public.[10] Using the letter to bridge the fictional world of the novel and the eighteenth-century epistolary world, Richardson positioned his readers, like those of the periodical, as potential correspondents, contributors, and co-editors. Once again, the letter circumvented strict fact/fiction divides as both Richardson and Belford served as editor, readers wrote to the author in the guise of characters, and the narrated events were intended to have a real-world impact. The novel itself became an editorial apparatus in which not only letters but also miscellaneous written and printed documents such as wills, Christian meditations, and prayer books were necessary for a complete reading. The letter's cyclical nature also meant that the editorial process would continue with the additions, sequels, abridgments, and commentaries that followed the initial publication.[11] A key feature of the letter as a bridge genre was the expectation of response.

Richardson drew on the editorial skills of readers already familiar with epistolary print, using the letter to locate his own work within the expanding

media world of the mid-eighteenth century. As Susan Whyman writes, the "extraordinary furor" surrounding the novels was due in part to "Richardson's awareness, encouragement, and manipulation of his readers' epistolary literacy," her term for eighteenth-century norms and practices supporting the writing, reading, and sharing of letters.[12] By putting *Clarissa* into context with an array of intertexts, both predictable—letter-writing manuals, commonplace books, genteel women's familiar letters—and unexpected—eighteenth-century diplomatic correspondence—this chapter will bring the novel into view not as a hermetic container for the feminine letter, but as an open system of epistolary exchange. While scholars from Ian Watt to William Warner have seen the letter as offering the illusion of privacy in an expanding print marketplace,[13] Richardson's uses for letters spanned epistolary functions: not merely spaces for the exploration of private, individual, and feminized subjectivity, letters connected the novel to the tradition of printed letters discussed earlier in this book, showed readers familiar with previous epistolary genres how to consume this new one, and offered didactic lessons on both morality and composition. *Clarissa* picked up on the ways newspapers and periodicals presented letters—with their connections to manuscript circulation—as proof of facts and layered in questions of feeling and morality. As characters self-consciously construct the narrative that will cohere as the novel, they ask again and again: How can writing serve as proof, and of what is it proof? The letter, Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook points out, could play contradictory roles: the site of authenticity and intimacy, it also allowed for the dangerous manipulation of language outside the zone of face-to-face interaction.[14] As Anna Howe writes to Clarissa, contradicting the characters' frequent praise for epistolary connection, "Speaking is certainly best: for words leave no traces; they pass as breath; and mingle with air, and may be explained with latitude. But the pen is a witness on record."[15] Presenting letters as both speech and text—both immediate unbosoming and legal documentation—*Clarissa* is nothing less than a treatise on mediation.

But even as Richardson relied upon letters to bridge manuscript and print within and without the novel, he counterintuitively helped to narrow the range of epistolary functions for the future. His attempts to position both himself and his readers as author-editors broke down under the increasingly mediated status of the printed letter; unable to maintain the stance that *Clarissa*'s letters derived from actual handwritten epistles, Richardson began to arrogate more authority to himself, elevating the individual male writer above his multiple female correspondents. The consolidating set of conventions that

associated women with letter writing meant that readers and commentators selected out the feminine correspondence as the core of *Clarissa*, downplaying the novel's other epistolary affordances. Examining the gender-genre linkage of women and letters, I argue that mid-eighteenth-century authors put forward the private, feminine, familiar letter as the epitome of the genre even as the letter's continuing work as a bridge subverted attempts at clear definitions. The image of the feminized letter was primarily prescriptive rather than descriptive, but it was also increasingly influential. In political and diplomatic correspondence, women's letters to friends and family, letter-writing manuals, and the first epistolary novels, a newly conspicuous tension emerged between manuscript and printed epistolary culture. Across media, mid-eighteenth-century writers struggled to make sense of a more circumscribed definition of the letter at the same time as they continued to deploy letters in every arena of social, literary, and communicative life.

## The Letter in the World: Diplomatic Letter Writing, 1740–60

In the 1740s, the letter remained the primary forum for mercantile, political, and journalistic communication. Such letters, which were likely more numerous than personal letters in the period and survive in enormous quantities in archives, blended business, news, and feeling under a single cover and often circulated among groups of correspondents. As the postal system expanded with new and improved provincial and international connections—constantly expanding the extent of "the world" in its overlapping geographical scope and metonymic representation—letters became even more central to the everyday functioning of business, government, and family life. In particular, diplomatic and political correspondence reveals the porous borders between professional and familiar letters, as well as the development of new standards for epistolary composition against which writers began to measure themselves. While scholars often overlook such documents in favor of more obviously intimate letters, government bureaucrats were voluminous correspondents, using the post to both succeed in their careers and stay in touch with distant friends and family.[16] In many diplomatic posts, especially during peacetime, there was little day-to-day business, so that the job became one of "information collection and dispatch-writing."[17] Diplomats maintained extensive private correspondence, from which they extracted to form their communiqués to London. The editors of the *London Gazette*, which was still published "by Authority" and compiled by the Secretary of State's office, could select from incoming intelligence for publication, and letters might be read in

Parliament or forwarded to government departments.[18] Diplomats also relied on letters arriving from London or other European capitals to verify the information they received in newspapers and pamphlets; in either direction, "Printed news was best supplemented by manuscript clarification wherever possible."[19] Diplomatic letter writing epitomized the blurring of public-private, masculine-feminine, and print-manuscript binaries in the "postal era."

Political correspondence thus blended official with personal information, family with trade concerns, scandalous gossip with complaints of lack of activity, and written with printed sources of news. Letter writers kept detailed records, often compiling letter books in which they copied their incoming and outgoing mail. The letters of the prominent Grenville-Pitt family, whose members included diplomats, naval captains, members of Parliament, and government ministers, bridged a spectrum of personal and political purposes. The family maintained an extensive correspondence, often exchanging group letters or expecting items to be shared within the circle; one brother might request that another, for example, "Make all our Family & Friends partakers of the pleasure this news will give you."[20] They also relied on newspapers to deliver information, so that letters acted as a complement to print. As second-oldest brother George Grenville (1712–70) wrote in 1745 in reference to the Jacobite uprising, "I will not repeat to you all the particulars of this unfortunate transaction, which you will have seen in the printed papers almost as fully as I can give them to you."[21] Grenville mixed military, economic, and family news in his letters and expected his correspondents likewise to bring together multiple sources of written and printed information.

The Grenville-Pitt correspondence makes clear both how widespread were ideas about feminine letter writing by midcentury and how constantly letter writers undermined such norms. The male and female correspondents of the family—who included Hester Pitt (née Grenville), wife of William Pitt the Elder, and George's wife, Elizabeth Grenville—continually invoked a sentimental style of letter writing. These letters display the conventional association between the body and the letter, and between the heart and the pen, so that a letter could speak and touch in the absence of the correspondent. When Richard Grenville-Temple (1711–79), Earl Temple and the family's eldest brother, wrote to approve of Pitt's engagement to his sister Hester, he received an effusive response in which the writer depicted himself as almost feminized: "Your letter is the kindest that ever flow'd from the best Pen speaking the best Heart. . . . If it did not look like an expression more of a Lover than a Friend, I shou'd say, I love the very Pen that wrote it."[22] Already bound together by

epistolary and political networks, the marital tie extended the families' correspondence, in which both men and women participated. Hester and William Pitt, like Elizabeth and George Grenville, often wrote joint letters to their friends, emphasizing the connections between their hearts and letters. When Pitt was thrown out of the government in 1755, Grenville-Temple extended him a loan of £1,000 to make up the loss of salary. "The affection & generosity of my Dearest Brothr affects me so strongly and in so many various ways that I find no words to express the sentiments with which my Heart is fill'd, nor am I literally in a situation to write any farther," Hester began the letter of thanks. Pitt continued just under his wife's writing: "The Heart of one Brother does not overflow more with nobleness and affection than that of the other dos with the warmest, quickest, deepest sentiments of Love and Gratitude. . . . We are both yours more affectionately than words can express."[23] Here, the sheet of paper represented a multiply gendered body. Similarly, male correspondents often used highly sentimental language when writing to each other; for example, in a letter of 18 November 1762, Grenville-Temple wrote to his friend John Wilkes, "My hands are almost frozen as I am just returned from riding, but my heart dictates to me that I am warmly My dear Colonel's most faithful & obedient Temple."[24] The genre united men and women in communal expressions of sentiment, downplaying distinctions between masculine and feminine correspondence.

Letter-writing manuals encouraged this sentimental epistolary style, as they transitioned in the first half of the eighteenth century from a focus on secretarial skill to familiar interaction.[25] A letter "shou'd be careless and unstudied, at least between Friend and Friend," wrote the author of *Polite Epistolary Correspondence* in 1748. "For a Friend will be more pleased with that Part of a Letter which flows from the Heart, than with that which is the Product of the Mind. . . . Letters thus writ, are Pictures of the Heart."[26] But while manuals extolled this spontaneous overflow of feeling, they also cautioned care and circumspection. In *The Entertaining Correspondent* (1759), John Tavernier instructed that "there is no obtaining a natural, easy stile, and a graceful manner, either of writing or speaking, but by practice; custom overcomes many difficulties."[27] The author of *The Preceptor* (1758), meanwhile, offered to teach the kinds of letters by which "the general Business of Life is transacted." He continued: "It is possible to pass many Years without the Necessity of writing Panegyrics or Epithalamiums; but every Man has frequent Occasion to state a Contract, or demand a Debt, or make a Narrative of some minute Incidents of common Life."[28] Letter-writing ability, like taste and sen-

sibility, was both innate and acquired, and like those skills it was simultaneously universal and divided according to gender.

However, actual letters rarely confined themselves to the manuals' categories of epistolary subgenres, since the material conditions of letters' production, transmission, and storage demonstrated the practical impossibility of writing spontaneously "from the heart." George Grenville's filing system included multiple drafts of many letters, including some that employ the "to the moment" style in which the letter writer narrated as if the events of the letter were taking place simultaneously with the writing. In a January 1762 letter, John Stuart, Earl of Bute, wrote to Grenville, "I have this minute receiv'd your letter," while in a note of May 1762, he continued, "I take up the pen, to write to you the exact state of the case."[29] While Grenville answered Bute in similar language, he noted on his copies that he had produced several drafts of each letter before sending it. Grenville-Temple used the same spontaneous style when writing to Wilkes, as on 21 November 1762: "I set pen to paper again my dear Marcus Cato to converse with you for a few moments."[30] In a December 1755 letter to her husband, Elizabeth Grenville began in a sentimental mode, addressing Grenville as "My Dearest Love" and telling him he could expect nothing in her letter "but what relates to your own fireside." In a postscript, however, she added political information she had gained in the interim: "The news of the day is the Speaker having detain'd in his Chair expecting Mr Hume Campbells writ to be move'd . . . but after having waited a considerable time Ld Marchmont was consulted & having said he had heard nothing upon that subject from the D. of Newcastle the House was adjourn'd."[31] The correspondents' careful attention to the processes of writing and reading meant that the sentimental trope of "writing to the moment" continually collapsed in their letters.

At the same time as friends and family expected their letters to circulate semi-openly within their circle, they worried about surveillance from outside parties. They knew that writing a letter entailed entering "the world," a fact that once again undercuts ideas about letters' private nature. Even as the improved postal system allowed them to exchange letters multiple times a week—so that Pitt, for example, could maintain his active government role even while convalescing from the gout at Bath—it was also, as a government office, suspiciously public. Both foreign and domestic mail was routinely opened and read, and the Post Office employed an official decipherer to crack codes.[32] Grenville-Temple displayed in his letters a particular suspicion of postal surveillance, and some passages seem to be aimed at the postmasters

and undersecretaries of state whom he expected to read his letters. As he wrote to Wilkes, editor of the radical publication the *North Briton*, in October 1762, "I am so used to things of this sort at the Post office"—a torn cover on one of his letters—"& am so sure that every line I write must be seen, that I never put any thing in black & white which might not be read at Charing Cross, for all I care."[33] Later that month he counseled discretion to Wilkes, writing, "Any thing of the least delicacy ought never to be conveyed by the Post," but in November he sent another defiant note, declaring, "I know this letter is to be read before it gets into your hands, if my sentiments are worth knowing I think them not worth concealing."[34] Even when writing to close friends and family, the authors of political and diplomatic letters knew never to assume that their letters could be normatively private.

Before and after the publication of the midcentury epistolary novels, then, the Grenvilles and their circle relied on the epistolary language of sensibility.[35] But they also made little distinction between their sentimental, familiar letters and their functional, political ones; letters veer from discussion of feeling to details of household affairs and military strategy. During the Seven Years' War, political appointee Charles Jenkinson provided George Grenville with updates on the progress of the campaigns in America and Europe. His letters juxtaposed this pressing, public military news with the most personal concerns, as in July 1759, when the Grenvilles' young son was gravely ill and Jenkinson added a note to his newsletter. "I hope that Providence at least for the Parent's sake will on this occasion spare the Child; I am in the utmost Distress for poor Mrs Grenville," he wrote. "If Publick News would not on this occasion look like Impertinence, I should inform You, that Letters were yesterday received from your Friend Mr Rodney which give an account that he had bombarded Havre de Grace." Ten days later, after the child's death, he wrote again: "As I am sure you are convinced how sincerely I grieve & condole with you & Mrs Grenville for the loss you have so lately sustained, I will not contribute by the use of many words to renew your own Sorrow on this melancholy Occasion. I will rather endeavour to divert it; & as you are a Captain of Militia, I will first tell you that the Norfolk Militia passed this day in review before the King."[36] For Jenkinson, the Grenvilles, the Pitts, and their correspondents, epistolary genre conventions allowed for this kind of promiscuous mixing of what, to modern readers, would appear as radically opposed types of feeling and information. Once a letter entered "the world," it was impossible to maintain divisions between public news and private sentiment.

## Duty and Feeling in a Mid-Century Middle-Class Woman's Letters

Pragmatic political correspondence like that of the Grenville-Pitt circle seems to contradict norms about the natural, private character of letters; in fact, it may give us a more holistic view of the period's epistolary sense, suggesting that letter writing in practice was neither specifically feminine nor motivated by the expression of individual interiority. Similarly, the ways that actual middle-class women writers adapted to new epistolary styles can reveal surprising connections between bureaucratic correspondence and familiar letters. While the Grenvilles' letters do not explicitly discuss letter-writing conventions and the consolidation of the sentimental style with the emergence of the epistolary novel, many writers used their letters to consider the epistolary genre itself. Jane Johnson (1706–59) was the wife of Woolsey Johnson, a well-to-do vicar in Olney, Buckinghamshire. She lived most of her life in the country and used letters to maintain ties with her four children, who went to school in Rugby and London, again bridging provincial and urban worlds. Johnson styled her letters after those of her favorite novel: *Clarissa*. The novel, she wrote in a letter to her cousin in 1749, "will do great things towards reforming the World." She expressed surprise that another friend, whom she previously thought to have "fine Taste and judgment," did not like the work and added, "I shall never meet with any person who after they have red it quite through, & do not commend it, but I shall conclude that they have either a bad heart, or a bad head or both, for in such case the fault must be some where & I am sure there is none in the Book."[37] Susan Whyman has focused on Johnson's correspondence to argue that she used letters strategically even as she espoused the standard of "conversation," a mode of letter writing that Richardson incorporated into his novels: "Though both Richardson and Johnson requested spontaneous epistolary outpourings from their correspondents, their own letters were constructed works marked by careful artifice."[38] Johnson's letters offer evidence that at least some readers fulfilled Richardson's desire that his work would offer both moral and epistolary instruction.

Like Richardson's fictional epistles, Johnson's ranged over communicative, aesthetic, and didactic functions. When her sons were young, for example, she sent them letters at school written in large writing with hand-ruled lines, so that the letters provided not only emotional connection but also penmanship instruction (figure 3.1). In a November 1753 letter to her son Robert, she separated long words into syllables to help with reading and spelling. Address-

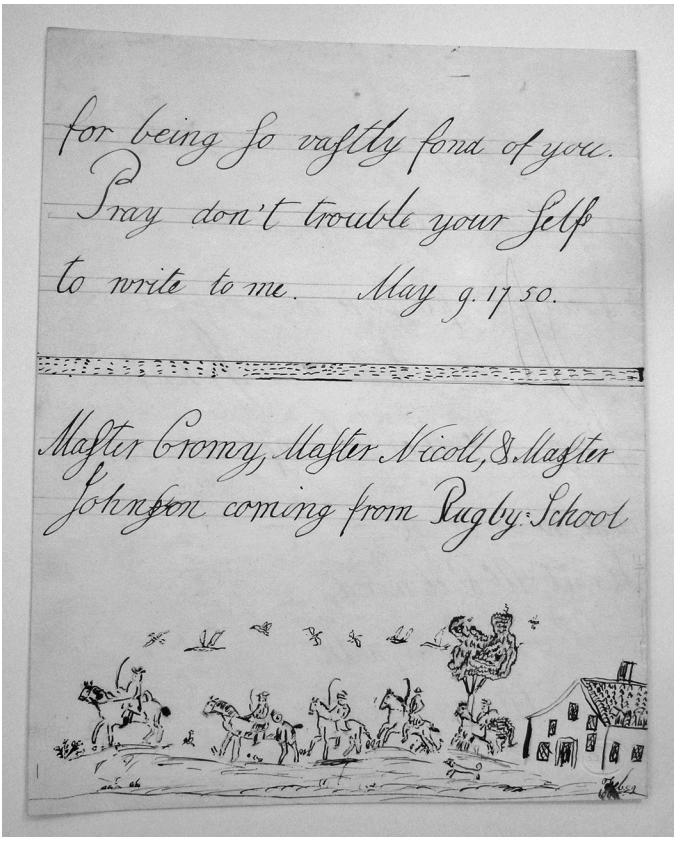

for being so vastly fond of you.
Pray don't trouble your Selfs
to write to me. May 9. 1750.
Master Cromy, Master Nicoll, & Master
Johnson coming from Rugby School

*Figure 3.1.* Jane Johnson's letter to her son George Johnson, 9 May 1750. Johnson lined the sheet of paper and used large writing so that the letter would serve as a model of penmanship for her son. Correspondence and Papers of Jane Johnson, MS. Don. c. 190, fol. 3$^{v}$, The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford.

ing the letter to "Mas-ter Ro-bert Au-gus-tus Johnson at Wytham on the Hill Lin-coln-shire," she wrote, "Your Brother Wool-sey has read every word of the other side of this Letter very well, every body says they don't think you can read it half so well, but I hope they are mis-ta-ken" and sent her "com-pli-ments" to Robert's schoolmaster.[39] Many letters to her friends also took a Richardsonian educational bent; in 1742 she sent two double letters, each covering eight handwritten pages, to a friend, Mrs. Garth, in which she expounded upon the religious duty to obey one's husband, where Garth had apparently been lacking. "Expect another Letter from me soon," she closed the first, "unless I hear that you are so far convinc'd of the most pernicious Error you are

in, as to have no occasion for any, which will be the most agreeable news imaginable for me to hear."[40] Johnson viewed the letter as a powerful didactic device, one that allowed her to extend her maternal and religious duties beyond the doors of her parsonage.

Johnson often metadiscursively commented on the style of her letters and aspired to the sentimental tone popularized by Richardson, even as she filled epistles with news and instruction. As she wrote to Mrs. Garth, "I hope you will not take any thing ill, that I have said in this Letter, since every word of it is the real sentiments of my heart & conscience."[41] At other times she exposed epistolary conventions when apologizing for her self-perceived breaches of them. "I want Rhetorick and Eloquence to put my sentiments in a proper light," she wrote to a cousin in October 1749, adding, "I once again beg pardon for all faults & imperfections in this Epistle, & particularly here for the bad writing, but really this is too long a Letter to write over twice, which I hope will plead my excuse."[42] To another friend, Henrietta Ingram, she wrote that she would not comply with the usual letter-writing norms: "I fancy you know . . . what sort of weather we have had for this month or six-weeks & all other such like events with which conversation & Letters are usually stuff'd, & I don't choose to take up either your time or my own with what will be useless to either."[43] As they did for her seventeenth-century predecessor Dorothy Osborne, letters for Johnson marked the scope of "the world," allowing her access to it without needing to leave the countryside. When she first opened a correspondence with Ingram in 1755, she noted, "Before I write any more you must write to me that I may know a little better what belongs to you. For at present all I have to say is like writing about folks in another World, since every body here is unknown to you & every body with you unknown to me."[44] Letters were interesting only if they conveyed both feeling and news, connecting the correspondents' separate epistolary worlds.

Johnson delighted in epistolary composition and, like her favorite heroines, used letters to perform everyday domestic duties, circulate literary productions, maintain ties of emotion over distance, and model good writing and good living. As a bridge genre, the letter also allowed her access to the worlds of print and fiction. Johnson copied Richardson's novels not only in content and style, but also typographically. Just as Richardson, a printer himself, used different fonts and symbols to convey an appearance of handwriting in print, Johnson used print conventions for visual impact in her handwritten letters. In her October 1749 letter to her cousin, she included "a story which I assure you has its foundation in truth," which she innovatively titled "The

History of Miss Clarissa of Buckinghamshire . . . because I take pleasure in the name." Johnson mimicked a printed title page by placing the title of the story set off in the middle of a line.[45] In 1747, she sent a dialogue in verse to her daughter, Barbara, which she laid out in different "fonts," writing the characters' names in roman type and the text in her usual italic handwriting.[46] She headed another 1747 letter to Barbara, "An Invitation to Miss Barbara Johnson to come into the Country A new Ballad by her Mama," writing, "No longer in Dull London stay./ But let the Country be your choice,/ We'll Welcome you with heart & voice."[47] She also assembled a nursery library for her children that included a text scholars now view as the first children's fairy tale in English; titled "A very pretty story to tell Children when they are about five or six years of age," it again follows the lead of Richardson, whose heroine Pamela produces a "Specimen of Nursery Tales and Stories."[48] Whyman writes that "letter-writing offered Johnson a training ground for composing other types of literature,"[49] showing how the letter can serve as a bridge for the individual writer as well as for the larger media environment. Like the readers who sent letters and essays to the *Spectator*, Johnson understood the letter genre as spanning media: not only did it create content for the printed epistolary novels she loved, but it also allowed her to import print features into her personal manuscripts.

Juxtaposed with the letters of the political powerhouse Grenville-Pitts, those of the middle-class Richardson fan Johnson further demonstrate the continuing porousness of the letter genre in the mid-eighteenth century. An array of pragmatic, functional epistolary texts—which often incorporated sentimental elements—continued to circulate in the postal world. The British postal system had expanded rapidly in the first half of the eighteenth century; its internal hub-and-spoke network thickened as by- and cross-posts were added to connect the main postal roads at the same time as connections to foreign ports were regularized and colonial posts were made part of a worldwide system. The 1711 Postal Act created a unified organization for the new nation of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, strengthening the government's monopoly on postal service.[50] Between 1715 and 1755, postal revenues rose 40 percent, from £150,000 to £210,000 a year, even though rates did not increase until 1763.[51] Both foreign and domestic posts had multiple weekly deliveries. By the midpoint of the postal era, this system had become a constant, reliable facet of everyday life, connecting secretaries in London with diplomats in Europe just as easily as it did mothers in Olney with their children at Rugby School.

With the influence of standardized posts, letter-writing manuals, and epistolary novels, personal letters did, in many ways, become more consistent and familiarized; perhaps the most obvious way in which this happened was that letters acquired a conventional format, the half-sheet quarto. This format, in which writers bought precut half sheets of paper and then folded them in half again to create a four-page booklet, meant that letters became more consistent with regard to length and layout. And midcentury letters also show the emergence of a common set of standards for what an ideal letter should communicate in terms of content. While correspondents noted that they countermanded epistolary norms, they evoked these norms even—or especially—as they apologized for a lack of adherence to them. When a powerful politician like William Pitt wrote that he sounded "more [like] a Lover than a Friend," he implied that this was not, or should not be, the standard for letters between male correspondents. As writers began discursively to construct more strictly gendered spheres in the second half of the eighteenth century, the association of the body and the letter meant that the latter was also subject to more strongly gendered interpretation.[52] But these disparate archival examples show that individual correspondents did not, for the most part, define their letters in gendered terms. They used the post to convey an array of military, commercial, and domestic news and sentiment, and they made little distinction between the types of letters they wrote to men and women. Even as correspondents in print began to present the letter as the universally acknowledged feminine genre, the content within those four pages tied together male and female writers within expanding, entangled worlds of epistolary intercourse.

## An "Army of Texts": Editorial Power in *Clarissa*

The most famous heroine of eighteenth-century literature, Clarissa Harlowe, modeled the conduct manuals' dicta about the naturally feminine character of letter writing. As Clarissa's best friend and chief correspondent, Anna Howe, notes in her posthumous summary of Clarissa's life, "It was always a matter of surprise to her, that the [female] sex are generally so averse as they are to writing; since the pen, next to the needle, of all employments is the most proper and best adapted to their geniuses; and this as well for improvement as amusement."[53] Clarissa's correspondence abounds with references to her supposedly natural ability at letter writing. Both she and Anna write that their hearts and minds "dictate" to their pens, a metaphor of automatic writing that works to support their assertions of truthfulness. Clarissa more than once notes

that she cannot control what she composes: "My heart is too full," she writes following her parents' first attempt to prohibit her correspondence with Anna, "so full that it might endanger my duty were I to unburden it to you on this occasion; so I will lay down my pen."[54] As her executor Belford writes to the "author of her ruin," Lovelace, after Clarissa's death, "It is my opinion that there never was a lady so young, who wrote so much and with such celerity. . . . It was a natural talent she was mistress of, among many other extraordinary ones."[55] This talent, in the face of the Harlowes' and Lovelace's constant accusations of artful and cunning behavior, aligns Clarissa with one set of cultural norms about natural, feminine letter writing and distances her from another set about women's hypocrisy and deceit. But the novel makes clear that this is a position Clarissa works hard to construct, and she is ultimately unsuccessful in maintaining it—in part because of the letter's continuing status as a bridge genre. The history of the letter across factual and fictional genres complicated singular epistolary definitions, offering Richardson a mechanism for reflecting upon the levels of mediation both *Clarissa* and Clarissa encountered.

Through a thoroughgoing appraisal of the status of the letter in the mid-eighteenth century, Richardson showed readers the dangers of assuming unmediated epistolary access and put emphasis instead on the editor's and printer's curatorial role. The letter proved particularly suited to the editorial task because, as we have seen, it forged links with textual miscellanies and with eighteenth-century interests in the relationship between speech, writing, and print as forms of publication. Epistolary "conversation" blurred media borders, which were an ongoing source of interest within the novel: on the one hand, discussion of the "language" of the eyes and Clarissa's penetrating "eye-beams" gives in-person communication a perspicacity that writing lacks, while, on the other hand, the authenticity-building trope of "writing to the moment" emphasizes the dominance of a scriptural economy in the novel.[56] As I have shown, readers in the mid-eighteenth century would have been familiar with the letter not only as their everyday form of written communication but also as one of the most common genres of print. As a printer and publisher, Richardson issued many types of printed letters—including Eustace Budgell's *A Letter to Cleomenes King of Sparta* (1731), Daniel Defoe's *Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great-Britain* (1724–27), the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, and the newspaper the *Daily Gazetteer* (1735–48)—before turning to the letter-writing manual and epistolary novel.[57] In addition to the journalistic and political genres that made extensive use of

letters, existing examples of fictionalized letters included popular works such as Aphra Behn's *Love-Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684), Giovanni Paolo Marana's *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy* (1684–94), Thomas Brown's *Letters from the Dead to the Living* (1702), Charles Gildon's *The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail* (1692), and Eliza Haywood's *Love-Letters on All Occasions* (1730)—works that ran the gamut from erotic fiction to political commentary. Epistolary manuals also used imaginary or representative model letters that, like *Clarissa*, provided entertainment alongside instruction in both morality and writing skill.

Epistolary form was thus a practical choice for Richardson because the letter genre could "accommodate others' texts alongside his own, expand to encompass revisionary material, adapt to account for the latest critical feedback."[58] But it was not only real-world readers who were forced to carefully decode the mediated status of the letter: *Clarissa*'s internal letter readers and writers constantly reflect upon their modes of proof and interpretation as the letter imports into the work the epistolary metadiscourse that we have seen as a central feature of letter writing. The structure of the novel reinforces the power of the editor, as it moves from the feminine conduct book of Clarissa and Anna's correspondence, to the seductive rhetoric of Lovelace's writing, before settling into the resolution of Belford's executorship. As editor, Belford enacts the letters' transition from private production to public consumption; he "corrects and completes our reading,"[59] just as Richardson attempted to correct and complete reader interpretation. Lovelace tries to fill this role when he insists, after Clarissa's death, on taking her papers and announces, "I will be the interpreter."[60] But his unsuitability as Clarissa's partner has long been revealed through his manipulation of expectations for transparent, authentic letters; when he views the collected volume of letters at the end of the novel he recognizes the power of the editorial process, exclaiming, "What an army of texts has she drawn up in array against me!"[61] Along with Clarissa and Anna, the reader must learn not to rely on gendered writing conventions and instead to take the stance of an editor assembling a variety of epistolary subgenres.

Clarissa and Anna initially appear to trust in feminized, sentimental literary conventions, an epistolary mode that promised direct access to the thoughts and feelings of one's correspondent. Indeed, Richardson argues in the preface to the third edition that "writing to the moment"—a term he coined—means that the "the hearts of the writers must be supposed to be wholly engaged in their subjects . . . so that they abound not only with critical situations, but with what may be called instantaneous descriptions and reflections."[62] The fictional

correspondents initially employ similar, conventional language in their epistolary instructions to one another. "I would have you write your whole mind," Clarissa tells Anna early in the novel, asking for her undiluted advice and judgment.[63] Anna responds: "Remember that friendship like ours admits of no reserves."[64] Later, she repeats to Clarissa, "I shall think I have reason to be highly displeased with you, if, when you write to me, you endeavour to keep from me any secret of your heart."[65] She insightfully probes into that, accusing Clarissa of reticence with regard to her early romantic feelings toward Lovelace: "Don't you find at your heart somewhat unusual make it go throb, throb, throb, as you read just here?" Clarissa again uses sentimental language to parry, writing, "I did not think it necessary, said I to myself, to guard against a critic when I was writing to so dear a friend," and denying "any of the *glow*, any of the *throbs* you mention."[66] As these female correspondents figure it, the decorporealized body of the letter should offer direct, if metaphorical, access to their hearts and minds.

Even before the revelation of Lovelace's treachery, however, these women writers complicate the apparently straightforward notion of writing from the heart. Letters are not spontaneous; they are, in a term that reappears frequently, "premeditated," offering the opportunity for carefully crafted self-presentation. Indeed, the entire narrative is framed as an opportunity for Clarissa to present her own justification, to persuade her audience—whether Anna, Mrs. Howe, the Harlowes, Belford, or Richardson's readers—of her truthfulness and virtue. As Anna, informing Clarissa that she is already the subject of "the public talk," writes in the opening letter, "I long to have the particulars from yourself." She coaches Clarissa: "Pray write in so full a manner as may gratify those who know not so much of your affairs as I do. If anything unhappy should fall out from the violence of such spirits as you have to deal with, your account of all things previous to it will be your justification."[67] Clarissa obliges, drawing upon the probative power of letters as she writes, "I will recite facts only."[68] But even as they use their letters to construct a quasi-legal record, the correspondents reflect on contradictory letter-writing conventions when faced with the apparent epistolary skill of a man, Lovelace. Anna casts her distrust into explicitly gendered terms:

> That you and I, my dear, should love to write is no wonder. We have always from the time each could hold a pen delighted in epistolary correspondencies. Our employments are domestic and sedentary, and we can scribble upon twenty innocent subjects and take delight in them because they *are* innocent; though

> were they to be seen, they might not much profit or please others. But that such a gay, lively young fellow as this, who rides, hunts, travels, frequents the public entertainments, and has *means* to pursue his pleasures, should set himself down to write for hours together, as you and I have heard him say he frequently does, that is the strange thing.[69]

Early on, then, the women are forced to account for the novel's subversion of letter-writing norms. By reflecting on its own slippery status, the epistolary genre enables an "objectivity that derives from shifting perspective and engaging multiple points of view."[70] Through metadiscursive epistolary commentary, all of the principle correspondents express an awareness of the limitations of sentimental conventions.

The tension between the continuing fact of the letter's multimedia, multigeneric, and non-gendered functions, and an apparent desire to code it as private and gender it as feminine, emerges frequently in the characters' discussions of their own letter-writing practices. Transferring manuscript to print and "publishing to the whole world" creates epistemological problems for both author and characters. Just as Richardson, anticipating the posthumous publication of his correspondence, collected, edited, and indexed his letters toward the end of his life,[71] Clarissa undertakes to edit her own history, operating under an eighteenth-century assumption that letters could easily be printed. Richardson pointed out in his correspondence that he changed the novel so that Clarissa was not the one coordinating publication, rendering his original title of *The Lady's Legacy* inapt.[72] At first, she acquiesces to Anna and Mrs. Howe's request that she record "the particulars of your tragical story . . . with a view that one day, if it might be published under feigned names, it would be of as much use as honour to the sex,"[73] but then she hits upon a better method. "Mr Lovelace, it seems, has communicated to his friend Mr Belford all that has passed between himself and me, as he went on," she writes. "The particulars of my story, and the base arts of this vile man will, I think, be best collected from those very letters of his."[74] Clarissa notes that she is unable to tell her own story, since she was drugged, unconscious, or insane for key periods of it. Allowing her rapist a key role in the production of her exemplary story provides strong testimony for Clarissa's repeated assertions "that what she cannot conceal from herself, she will publish to all the world."[75] Publication of an edited collection, she argues, will be more illuminating than the dispersal of her single-authored correspondence, and more efficacious and just than the legal prosecution of Lovelace that the Harlowes demand as a condition for reconciliation.

But print publication also exposes the story to the ongoing processes of interpretation and response that *Clarissa* has elicited ever since its appearance in "the world." Lovelace himself draws attention to this fact when he notes both the common and unusual nature of publishing such letters in the mid-eighteenth-century print marketplace. "I am to be *manifestoed* against, though no prince: for Miss Howe threatens to have the case published to the whole world," he writes, knowing that Belford has already sent copies of Lovelace's letters to Clarissa and Anna. But, he continues, "I have a good mind not to oppose it; and to write an answer to it as soon as it comes forth, and exculpate myself by throwing all the fault upon the old ones."[76] Like the anti-Pamelists who responded in print to what they saw as the earlier heroine's cunning and hypocrisy, Lovelace plans to use the ever-unfolding nature of letter writing to his own advantage; any printed letters can simply be countered with further ones. Richardson takes the same tack when he appends the "Postscript" to the first edition, responds to his correspondents' criticism and praise, or adds new letters to subsequent editions. He continually reinforces the reader's role as both correspondent and editor as he shows that the sequence of letter writing can always continue.

This accumulative process can help to account for what appear to be the novel's contradictory impulses toward storytelling and moralizing, and for its competing types of didacticism. The novel became "an aggregate of modular parts rather than an indissoluble whole."[77] Richardson not only, as he wrote in the "Postscript," sought to "inculcate . . . the great lessons of Christianity" rather than offer a playwright's "*poetical justice*";[78] he also larded the text with implicit and explicit directions on the "art of letter writing." Characters break out into self-reflexive commentary on their own letters, hinting at the epistolary model readers should follow. While confined to her room at Harlowe Place, for example, Clarissa writes that she has "leisure to moralize." No matter what, she continues, letters should mingle morality with news, since "not to be able to make [such remarks], even in a more affecting situation, when one sits down to write, would show one's self more engaged to *self* and one's *own* concerns, than attentive to the wishes of a friend."[79] Later, she praises Anna's "talent of introducing serious and important lessons, in such a happy manner, as at once to delight and instruct."[80] And again, after criticizing her sister for appearing "masculine in her air, and in her spirit," Clarissa adds, "Forgive me, my dear friend, breaking into my story by these reflections. Were I rapidly to pursue my narration, without thinking, without reflecting, I believe I should hardly be able to keep in my right mind, since vehemence and passion would then

be always uppermost."[81] Epistolary skill allows Clarissa to maintain emotional equilibrium, once again demonstrating her self-control. As Richardson wrote, defending the length of the work, "The letters and conversations, where the story makes the slowest progress, are presumed to be *characteristic*," and they are those "in which a good deal of the instruction essential to a work of this nature is conveyed."[82] The self-reflexive nature of letters meant that Richardson's novel easily incorporated aspects of conduct books and letter-writing manuals.

Richardson's characteristic technique of "writing to the moment" seems to conflict with such metadiscursive, didactic asides, as it "creates a sense of immediacy and spontaneity" that "emphasize[s] the instability of [Pamela and Clarissa's] present, the imminent danger that threatens to interrupt the writing totally."[83] But it is not primarily Anna and Clarissa who espouse this method: Lovelace is presented as its foremost proponent, a paradox that reveals, in fact, the inability of letters to transparently convey meaning. Richardson emphasizes this point by having Lovelace break off his narrative of the events leading up to the rape to expound upon his epistolary style: "Though this was written afterwards, yet (as in other places) I write it as it was spoken, and happened; as if I had retired to put down every sentence as spoken. I know thou [Belford] likest this lively *present-tense* manner, as it is one of my peculiars."[84] Likewise, Lovelace alerts readers—however subtly—to the failure of sentimental epistolary language when he provides a false etymology for the word "correspondence." Richardson added Lovelace's gloss after the publication of the second edition, when, in a further editorial move, he "restored" to the text a number of letters and passages in favor of Clarissa and against Lovelace. In the new passage, Lovelace attempts to convince Clarissa to show him her correspondence with Anna—although he does not reveal that he has already intercepted one crucial letter. He tries to impress her with an eloquent, heartfelt appraisal of letter writing:

> I proceeded therefore—That I loved Familiar-letter-writing, as I had more than once told her, above all the species of writing: It was writing from the heart (without the fetters prescribed by method or study) as the very word *Correspondence* implied. Not the heart only; the *soul* was in it. Nothing of body, when friend writes to friend; the mind impelling sovereignly, the vassal-fingers. It was, in short, friendship recorded; friendship given under hand and seal; demonstrating that the parties were under no apprehension of changing from time or accident, when they so liberally gave testimonies, which would always be ready, on failure, or infidelity, to be turned against them.[85]

While a number of critics have taken this description as Richardson's own definition of the familiar letter transposed into the mouth of his villain,[86] the addition of this passage represents a strategic choice on Richardson's part to emphasize not only Lovelace's hypocrisy and manipulative nature, but also the dangers of relying on such a shallow view of mediated communication.

Indeed, it is in the moments in which Richardson most actively draws attention to the letter as a material artifact that he reveals the limits of the printed letter. The editorial insertion, set off in double black lines, indicating that the "black transaction" of the rape will be "given by the injured lady to Miss Howe, in her subsequent letters," is followed a few pages later by the "mad letters," in which Clarissa's anguished mental state is indicated by her inability to write a complete, coherent note. These pages attempt to display a collection, focusing on the physical letter with editorial comments such as "Torn in two pieces" and "Scratched through, and thrown under the table."[87] Paper X, the final of the letters, includes printed scraps of verse scattered across the page, reading vertically and diagonally as well as horizontally. But rather than supporting authenticity, the effort draws attention to printing techniques and to the missing manuscript original. Likewise, the 103 printer's fists (☞) inserted in the margins of the letter from Anna to Clarissa that Lovelace intercepts, "mark[ing] the places devoted for vengeance, or requiring animadversion," as he puts it, so overwhelm the text as to reassert themselves as printers' devices rather than manuscript marks—no handwritten letter could fit all of the symbols.[88] At several of the novel's critical turning points, Richardson's efforts to assert the authenticity of the manuscript letter in fact re-inscribe its printed status and the distinctions rather than connections between media. Even though the bridge genre of the letter continued to reference manuscript conventions, printed letters increasingly presented a unique set of features.

## Leaving Something to the Reader: Richardson as Author, Richardson as Editor

Richardson highlighted precisely the bridging function of letters in explaining his authorship. He turned to epistolary fiction, he asserted, by building on the flexible genres with which he had experience: "It was Chance and not Skill or Learning, that made me fall into this way of Scribbling."[89] In 1742 he wrote to his friend Aaron Hill, "I seldom read but as a Printer," a function that entailed surveying a wide range of epistolary print.[90] In *Clarissa*, Richardson brought together key genres of printed letters, including the letter-writing

manual, the posthumous letter collection, the aristocratic libertine's letters, and scholarly rhetorical epistles, and combined them with the consolidating definition of the feminine letter of sensibility, the latter showcased but questioned in Clarissa and Anna's correspondence. *Clarissa* uses the bridge genre of the letter to address the epistemological question of how to best convey knowledge and sentiment in mediated form. As Thomas Keymer writes, the epistolary novel cultivates the skills that also allow readers to interpret the world around them: Richardson "make[s] reading not simple but problematic; . . . his expectation is that the reader's activity in addressing the resulting difficulties will itself be a source of instruction."[91] But eighteenth-century readers—like those of today—often misinterpreted this aspect of Richardson's project because they were moving away from a more heterogeneous definition of letter writing and toward a view of the letter as feminine, domestic, and feeling oriented.

*Clarissa*'s epistolary form thus forged connections across the world of print. Richardson used this phrase—"the world"—to describe both his circle of reader-correspondents and the literary milieu into which his novels entered. As he wrote in 1748, "The well-judging and discerning Few . . . ought in ye distinguishing sense to be called *The World*."[92] When he circulated drafts of his novels, he wrote in a letter to friend Sophia Wescomb, his "Letters in Print, before Publication . . . might be said to be written only to those" whose advice he solicited. But, he continued, when the printed letters "are laid before the World, then they are written to that World."[93] Every time people in "the world" wrote letters they might be imitating Clarissa; no other genre could implicate its readers to the same degree. But by becoming correspondents these readers were also imitating Richardson, simultaneously author and editor. Glen Johnson has examined the "extent, complexity, and subtlety of Richardson's use of editorial privilege in *Clarissa*," arguing that "Richardson considered his editorial voice, especially in the footnotes and interpolations within the text, an integral part of his strategy of presentation in *Clarissa*," as it allowed him to maintain the stance that his fictional text could have a real-world impact.[94] Like the editors of newspapers and periodicals before him—who similarly both welcomed and complained about the flow of reader correspondence—Richardson used printed letters to lend his novel the appearance of objectivity.[95] The title page of the first edition identified *Clarissa* as being "Published by the Editor of PAMELA," and in the preface he called himself "the editor to whom it was referred to publish" the letters.[96] But in the postscript he revealed himself as "the author of the foregoing work" in order to

respond to the letters he had received arguing in favor of "what they call a *fortunate ending*"—this despite the fact that the postscript immediately follows a summary conclusion "Supposed to be written by Mr Belford."[97] In the preface to *Sir Charles Grandison* he further complicated questions of authorial intention, writing of all three of his novels, "How such remarkable Collections of private Letters fell into his hands, he hopes the Reader will not think it very necessary to enquire."[98] As "Collections," the novels were able to maintain their in-between status as both original manuscripts and edited print.

Keymer has argued that Richardson uses the letter not primarily to enable psychological intimacy with his characters, but to place the "onus of interpretation" on readers: "By withholding any presiding authorial voice, or by dissolving it instead into a multiplicity of competing epistolary voices, Richardson knowingly fostered the active participation of his readers."[99] Richardson took a "very ambivalent view of the letter as a form that lends itself equally to candid expression and insincere design."[100] But this ambivalence was not the author Richardson's, but rather was built into the letter as a bridge genre; he was not subverting norms but drawing upon existing practices. The printing of letters primed readers to consider the mediated status of the texts they were consuming. Reliability, in both the story and its narrators, "comes about not only through authenticity—epistolary rhetoric to the contrary—but rather, through inclusion in a total context."[101] As Richardson wrote of *Sir Charles Grandison* in 1754, "Something also must be left to the Reader to make out. . . . The whole Story abounds with Situations and Circumstances debatable."[102] The contradictions and difficulties of the novels allowed them to serve "as Trials of the Readers Judgment, Manners, Taste, Capacity."[103] Making such demands upon the reader both tied Richardson to a long tradition of epistolary print and personal letters—in which readers would need to weigh sources and consider competing narratives to determine the value of journalistic, scientific, social, and diplomatic information—and formed the basis for his "new species of writing." The invitation to the reader to take on an editorial role—to bring together the editions, addenda, textual references, responses, continuations, abridgements, and reviews of *Clarissa* and to weigh their relative value—was a key element of the "media event" Richardson initiated: "These are the acts not of an author or novelist, but of a print-media worker attempting to intervene in media culture and change novel consumption practices."[104]

While it is thus correct to call *Clarissa* a "sentimental novel," this terminology replicates the later eighteenth-century tendency to select out the feminine letter at the expense of many overlapping uses for epistolary writing.[105]

The conflict between the novel's multilayered array of letters and the growing cultural preference for sentimental, feminized letter writing created an instability in the text to which generations of readers have responded. Richardson was well aware of this instability and incorporated levels of textual apparatus, including prefaces, postscripts, footnotes, and letters to readers, in which he both continued editing the novel and proposed an authoritative interpretation. As he wrote in a 1747 letter, "What contentions, what disputes have I involved myself in with my poor Clarissa, through my own diffidence, and for want of a will!"[106] In the "Postscript" to the novel, he noted that, over the course of *Clarissa*'s publication in volumes, he had received "many anonymous letters, in which the writers have *differently* expressed their wishes as to what they apprehended of the catastrophe" and argued that the tragic conclusion was "designed to inculcate upon the human mind, under the guise of an amusement, the great lessons of Christianity."[107] Many critics have seen this post facto response as a self-defeating attempt to "fix" the meaning of a polyvalent work; Terry Castle, for example, dismisses this "elaborate rearguard action" as "sheer heavy-handedness."[108] But Richardson—while clearly distressed by what he saw as misreadings—continued to use the model of epistolary exchange and editorial oversight to interact with his readers; he claimed that, when debating points with his correspondents, "Where-ever my mind was upon the *Balance*, or doubtful, I have given it against my self."[109] He circulated letters written to him about *Clarissa*, particularly those of his correspondent Hester Mulso (later Chapone), to a wide epistolary circle; he requested a copy of an alternate ending, in which the rape never occurs and Lovelace converts before dying, written by Lady Echlin, another frequent correspondent; and he responded with his own alternative sending Lovelace to America.[110] Like his characters, Richardson expected his manuscript and print letters to be carefully read, reread, annotated, and arranged.

Richardson continued to edit and revise all three of his novels until the end of his life; published texts consisting of Clarissa's "meditations" and letters "restored from the original manuscripts"; pursued a continuation of *Sir Charles Grandison* that would be assembled entirely out of letters written by his actual female correspondents in the voices of his characters; and in 1753 wrote to his correspondent Lady Bradshaigh that he was still finessing *Pamela*: "I will give Pamela my last Correction, if my Life be spared; that, as a Piece of Writing only, she may not appear, for her Situation, unworthy of her Younger Sisters."[111] Each of the novels includes footnotes indicating that other letters have been omitted, "making [readers] aware that the novel itself is an edited

work that selects suitable manuscript materials for publication," as Louise Curran writes.[112] Robert Erickson notes that such editorial tasks also fall to his characters, who are constantly writing, revising, correcting, transcribing, and reading aloud, practices that they share with their author: "Richardson loved to read his own writing but almost always, I think, with a view to revision, correction, and the additional sharpening of critical passages."[113] When answering objections about *Clarissa* in his personal correspondence, Richardson's pedagogical technique was to send readers back to the text for closer reading; in a well-known incident, he responded to two women's critiques—one accusing Clarissa of prudery, the other of coquettishness—by sending each a copy of the other's letter.[114] In 1754, in response to a reader's letter, he printed his *Copy of a Letter to a Lady, Who Was Solicitous for an Additional Volume to the History of Sir Charles Grandison*, circulated it among his epistolary group, and added it to the final volume of the novel's first edition.[115] The aggregative nature of letters meant that such exchanges could never truly end and, therefore, that the novels' meaning would always remain up for debate.

But Richardson's efforts to involve his correspondents as co-editors collapsed at the moments in which he re-asserted himself as author. While Richardson engaged in dialogue with his readers, he rarely changed his novels to accord with their advice. David Brewer argues that "Richardson solicited these contributions, only to ostentatiously ignore them" because he positioned himself at the center of a coterie, with the ultimate authority to arrange and amend. However, this contradictory stance elicited a deluge of "further letters and episodes, most of which were at odds with Richardson's manifest intentions."[116] As he wrote to his Dutch translator Johannes Stinstra, "Clarissa has not only brought me a Multitude of personal Friends; but has been the Occasion of enlarging greatly my Correspondencies with both Sexes; in the Course of which I have been obliged to obviate Objections, and to give the Reason of my Management in particular Parts of the Work."[117] As had Defoe and Addison before him, Richardson complained about readers making suggestions before the publication of the final volumes, writing to Elizabeth Carter on 17 December 1748, "A great deal of this trouble I have had from publishing a work in Parts which left everyone at liberty to form a catastrophe of their own."[118] But while correspondents did suggest changes, they also deferred to Richardson's opinion. Referring to her pamphlet *Remarks on "Clarissa*," Sarah Fielding wrote to him in 1749, "No pen but your's can do justice to Clarissa. Often have I reflected on my own vanity in daring but to touch the hem of her garment."[119] Likewise, Anne Dewes wrote in July 1750, "Entirely unable am I

to contribute [to *Sir Charles Grandison*]: much greater abilities could not give you the assistance your excess of humility makes you demand."[120] Rather than offering their own editorial advice, correspondents often called for more writing from Richardson; as Dewes wrote, "I rejoice at every addition you make to Clarissa; tho', when I first read it, I did not think it could be improved."[121] Even as both Richardson and his correspondents used their letters to represent writing and reading as communal processes, they also re-inscribed his singular authorship.

*Clarissa* therefore dramatized the period's tension between epistolary spontaneity and mediation that was also evident in letter-writing manuals and personal correspondence. In doing so, it revealed Richardson's difficulty in maintaining the fiction of himself as editor rather than author. In an April 1748 letter to writer William Warburton, he demonstrated the intricacies in which his double role as author/editor entangled him. Asking Warburton to revise the preface he had composed for the second edition, Richardson wrote:

> I could wish that the *Air* of Genuineness had been kept up, tho' I want not the letters to be *thought* genuine; only so far kept up, I mean, as that they should not prefatically be owned *not* to be genuine: and this for fear of weakening their Influence where any of them are aimed to be exemplary; as well as to avoid hurting that kind of Historical Faith which Fiction itself is generally read with, tho' we know it to be Fiction.[122]

Like Addison and Steele, Richardson assumed for himself the ultimate authority over the letters, even as he maintained a claim on epistolary integrity. The letters, as quasi-allegory, must be both true and fictional, both edited and authored, a tricky position given Richardson's status as a bestselling author and prolific printer. The double negative of *not* owning that the letters were *not* genuine was the result of transforming the ambiguous, intermedial status of the letter into the plot of a novel. Richardson's decades of work as a printer, and the responses he received in print and manuscript to each of his novels, showed him that no text could ever be definitive. The only event that could potentially halt the feedback loop, he wrote in 1754, was his death: "when this hasty-judging world will be convinced that they have seen the *last work* of this too-voluminous writer, they will give what he has done, more of their Attention—*perhaps*."[123] In fact, he expected the editorial process to continue after his death, writing in 1753 to Hester Mulso that he had "laid by a copy of each [novel], with such corrections in them as my friends, or my own reperusal, have suggested to me, in case, after my demise, new editions should be

called for."[124] Establishing the text as an editorial apparatus meant that the work of curating and correcting could outlive the author.

## Debating Epistolarity: Richardson and Fielding

Richardson worked through these ambiguities in his personal correspondence, which he used to invest readers in early drafts of the work, to request feedback, and to gin up publicity. As Louise Curran points out, Richardson is famous for his correspondence with women, and he frequently referred to women as superior letter writers: "Richardson's interest in epistolary exchange with women was not simply an act of mentorship or instruction but one of encouragement."[125] He wrote to Johannes Stinstra that his female correspondents "would do Credit to their Sex, and to the Commonwealth of Letters, did not their Modesty with-hold them from appearing in it. Yet with several of them, I have charming Contentions, on different Parts of what I have written."[126] Richardson's emphasis on his female correspondents valorized women's critical judgments of his novels, but he denied their desire to appear in print—despite the fact that some of them, including Sarah Fielding and Hester Mulso, had been or would be published authors. His missives to female correspondents also expressed contradictory opinions on the status of women's letters, as he argued for epistolary intimacy *through* textual premeditation. Letter writing, he told Sophia Wescomb, is "friendship avowed under hand and seal: friendship upon bond, as I may say: more pure, yet more ardent, and less broken in upon, than personal conversation can be . . . because of the deliberation it allows, from the very preparation to, and action of writing." This near repetition of Lovelace's disingenuous description of correspondence in fact draws attention to the premeditated nature of Richardson's letters. As he warned Wescomb, almost undermining his own instructions, "Writing to your own sex I would principally recommend; since ours is hardly ever void of design, and makes a correspondence dangerous."[127] Revealed within a single letter, such fluctuating views of the genre—as both natural and artful, feminine and masculine, direct and manipulative, virtuous and dangerous—demonstrate the features that the bridge genre transferred to *Clarissa*. The editorial role that epistolary fiction entailed meant that the author's only means of responding to fans and critics was through yet more letters. Richardson's exegesis on the unmanageable character of epistolary "conversation" laid a foundation for his enormously influential experiments in novel writing, for the bestselling satires and responses that emerged in the work of

Henry Fielding, and for the generations of novelists who would mediate the two authors' conflicts and complexities.

In defending his writing, Richardson made a specific kind of genre argument. It was not the novel or the epistolary novel that he had invented; rather, his contribution was the genre of "writing to the moment." "Ye World is not enough used to this way of writing, to the moment. It knows not that in the minutiae lie often the unfoldings of the Story, as well as of the heart; & judges of an action undecided as if it were absolutely decided," he wrote to Lady Bradshaigh.[128] *Clarissa* combined the record of daily events, focus on proof claims, and communal style of reading and writing that were central to late-seventeenth and early eighteenth-century epistolary norms, with the emerging sentimental language of the heart's transparency. But this multitude of influences created problems of definition for midcentury readers, which are revealed in a contemporary exchange that has had a longstanding impact on both the eighteenth-century rise of the novel and later critical valuations of Richardson: that between Richardson and Fielding. The two authors apparently only exchanged one or two letters in their lives, but their novels acted as open letters to each other that set many terms of the debate about the novel genre. The "correspondence" offered readers two primary models for novel reading: that of the networked epistolary narrator who invites the reader to serve as an editor and that of the third-person omniscient who offers a more directive interpretation of events within the world of the novel. In order for Fielding to respond to Richardson's version of the novel, then, he had to respond directly to the epistolary genre, first in the parody of *Shamela* and later by moving away from epistolarity. The focus on the epistolary genre in his works emphasizes the "intense literariness of [Fielding's] critique, the strength of his concern with discursive as well as more straightforwardly practical hypocrisy."[129] Fielding did not allow the self-contradictions of Richardson's role as author-editor to stand but, rather, made them into the plot of *Shamela*, as the title character manipulates the epistolary genre to rise in the world.

In his correspondence, Richardson fixated on *Tom Jones*—in which letters are key to the plot but do not offer room for multiple perspectives—as the antithesis of his own authorial project, criticizing the world in general and friends in particular who admitted to enjoying the novel. There was no room in his media environment for readers who could appreciate both authors. "While the Taste of the Age can be gratified by a Tom Jones . . . I am not to expect that the World will bestow Two Readings, or One indeed, attentive

one, on such a grave Story as Clarissa," he wrote in 1749. A few months later, he denied that he had read the other novel: "I have been prejudiced by the Opinion of Several judicious Friends against the truly coarse-titled Tom Jones; and so have been discouraged from reading it.—I was told, that it was a rambling Collection of Waking Dreams, in which Probability was not observed: And that it had a very bad Tendency." But he was apparently familiar enough by 1752 to declare, "Tom Jones is Fielding himself, hardened in some places, softened in others" and to note that the "Examination" of those who had read both novels would show him whom "to have called Sophias, and whom Clarissas."[130] Richardson argued that the reader's morality was revealed in her choice between *Tom Jones* and *Clarissa*, a version of the novel-reading debate that would continue for the rest of the century.

Despite his parodies, however, Fielding was apparently a reader who could appreciate both his own works and those of Richardson. In 1748, after completing the fifth volume of *Clarissa*, Fielding wrote to Richardson to express his admiration. The letter is couched in the sentimental epistolary language of a transparent, speaking heart that Richardson employed in both *Clarissa* and his own correspondence. Denying the motivation of flattery, since "the World will not suppose me inclined to flatter one whom they will suppose me to hate if the[y] will be pleased to recollect that we are Rivals for that coy Mrs. Fame," Fielding argues, "my Heart is now writing and not my Head." He confesses to terror and tears in the rape scene and its aftermath, and, like a good Richardsonian, connects an emotional response to the novel to moral behavior in life: "God forbid that the Man who reads this with dry Eyes should be alone with my Daughter when she hath no Assistance within Call." He concludes, "I assure you nothing but my Heart can force me to say Half of what I think of *the* Book."[131] Richardson's response to Fielding does not survive, although he mentioned or transcribed the letter in other correspondence. But he seems to have felt, vividly, both that Fielding only became popular by stealing the story of *Pamela* and that *Tom Jones* was written as an anti-*Clarissa*, requiring response in the form of *Sir Charles Grandison*. "It is in the texts of their novels that Richardson and Fielding weigh in with what they intended to be their most damaging personal criticism," Allen Michie writes. "One work is an 'answer' to another work's 'question.'"[132] Michie argues that the "tidy simplicity of the opposition" between Richardson and Fielding—undercut as it is by Fielding's response to *Clarissa* and his later attempts at novels of sensibility, including *Amelia*—gave critics and the reading public the terms with which to debate the novel genre. The comparison created the dichotomies, such as epis-

tolary versus narrative, tragedy versus comedy, idealism versus realism, and high versus low, that have proved central to valuations of the genre.[133] The nesting sets of open letters internal and external to Richardson's novels elicited generations of responses that led readers and authors to reflect on what they wanted their novels to be and to do. The ongoing exchange within the epistolary network proved crucial to the idea of the critical, engaged reader as the correct type of literary consumer.

## Conclusion

Richardson's personal correspondence frequently extolled an epistolary-manual version of feminine sentimental letter writing; as he wrote to Sophia Wescomb, "What charming advantages, what high delights . . . flow from the familiar correspondences of friendly and undesigning hearts," a practice that he depicted as particularly suited to a "young lad[y] . . . retiring to her closet."[134] But printed letters could not be so contained: they were "written to that World," his circle of friends, correspondents, and the more unwieldy reading audience. While he tried to accommodate the public's taste, he expressed resignation at its ability to misread *Clarissa*; as he wrote in 1748, "There are more Lovelaces in the World, than the World imagines there are."[135] Even for the master printer Richardson, the print medium created challenges and complications to the project of circulating an exemplary moral tale. *Clarissa* presents an extended meditation on the question of proof: of how one can prove virtue in a world where speaking, writing, and printing all offer means of both clarifying and obfuscating meaning. Richardson drew on the role of letters as proof in early eighteenth-century newspapers, journals, and periodicals, with which he was intimately familiar. Epistolary writing, as I have argued, is effective as a genre of proof because it enlists a network of witnesses, and printed letters expand this network outward into "the world." But Richardson found it impossible to reproduce in print some of the novel's key events—most notably the "black transaction" of the rape, bracketed by double horizontal lines at the center of the novel—a fact that compromised print's probative status and invited the questions and critiques with which he contended and that continue today.

The consolidation in the second half of the eighteenth century of the private, feminine letter as the prototypical letter has obscured the public nature of written and printed letters before and during the media storm over *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, *Shamela* and *Tom Jones*. But by looking closely at the hundreds of letters in *Clarissa*, we can draw out the eighteenth-century reader's con-

tinuing interest in discussions of competing media within the realm of print, as well as the intense negotiation between media required to distinguish print from manuscript and "masculine" from "feminine" writing. Relying upon the letter as a bridge to manuscript correspondence as well as to other forms of printed letters allowed Richardson to engage with these complex questions, and also allowed readers to align with Clarissa, Anna, and Belford in taking on key editorial functions. Richardson's media-focused interactions within his novels, with his readers, and with the works of his rival set the stage for the later eighteenth century's refinement of novelistic technique and privileging of the novel as the feminine printed genre and of the letter as the feminine written genre. The further elaboration of that process in the novels of Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen is the focus of chapter 5.

If both novel reading and letter writing were increasingly seen as feminine preserves in the second half of the eighteenth century, Richardson and his reader-responders played an undeniable role in establishing these conventional links between gender and genre. The standard view of *Clarissa*—underscored by its perceived foil, *Tom Jones*—became one that emphasized its sentimental aspects and the primacy of its female correspondents. "By the late eighteenth century," Dena Goodman writes, "the superiority of feminine epistolary style had become a cliché throughout Europe."[136] The cliché was so well established that Austen satirized it, along with the women-associated gothic novel, in *Northanger Abbey*. The sardonic male protagonist, Henry Tilney, praises "the easy style of writing for which ladies are so generally celebrated," adding, "Every body allows that the talent of writing agreeable letters is peculiarly female."[137] Women's letters display just three faults: "A general deficiency of subject, a total inattention to stops, and a very frequent ignorance of grammar."[138] The debate about that nexus of feminized subjectivity—women, letters, and the novel—would continue long into the Victorian period. While Fielding's directive third-person narration garnered praise for its eclecticism and erudition, Richardson's influence on the novel genre was felt throughout the century. As the proportion of all fiction in the literary market increased after 1750, the epistolary novel became the dominant form[139] and the feminization of letters taken for granted. When the mainly female novelists of the second half of the eighteenth century responded to this new media environment, the long shadow that *Clarissa* cast over definitions of "the" novel and "the" letter may have been the most significant aspect of the lady's legacy.

# A New World

## Biographical Writing and Epistolary Evidence

The influence of *Pamela* and *Clarissa* helped to establish the printed letter as a forum for interrogating the conflicted mediation of the self in writing, showing how the letter's persistent outward-facing features continually undercut emerging definitions stressing its personal, domestic character. But it was not solely in the epistolary novel that the letter's consolidating status as the genre of privacy, femininity, and interiority was under negotiation in the late eighteenth century; this was also at the heart of a series of debates in the 1770s, '80s, and '90s that reconfigured the genre of biography and, more generally, notions about how to narrativize a life. When Samuel Johnson—at once the period's most famous biographer and biographical subject—described his sources for the essays that became known as the *Lives of the Poets* (1779–81), he emphasized the examination of letters as a standard investigative step. "The chearfulness with which he bore his confinement, appears from the following letter," he wrote of Richard Savage. "Of Swift's general habits of thinking if his letters can be supposed to afford any evidence he was not a man to be either loved or envied," he summarized. Thomas Gray's were similarly revealing: "What has occurred to me, from the slight inspection of his letters in which my undertaking has engaged me, is, that his mind had a large grasp; that his curiosity was unlimited, and his judgement cultivated; that he was a man likely to love much where he loved at all, but that he was fastidious and hard to please."[1] Johnson relied on manuscript letters he had gathered, printed letter collections, and epistolary testimony from his subjects' friends; many of the *Lives* included entire letters as insertions or appendices. Letters were central to the tripartite structure of the essays—each of which offered biographical and bibliographical chronologies, a "character" of the poet, and critical reflections—as they both revealed personal sentiments and confirmed public facts.

At the same time as Johnson treated letters as informative devices, however, he displayed a typically eighteenth-century wariness about the public-private nature of such documents. "It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters," he

remarked in his discussion of Alexander Pope. This was a misconception: "There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. . . . [A] friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance, in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character."[2] Even as he offered letters as evidence of his poets' thoughts and sentiments, he expressed skepticism about their ability to furnish accurate knowledge; he often accused his subjects of epistolary misrepresentation. But when James Boswell came to write the *Life of Johnson* a decade later, he too relied on epistolary "performances," assiduously collecting letters from Johnson's friends and disputing the ownership of documents with his rival biographers, Hester Thrale Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins. As Boswell wrote in his journal in 1773, during the friends' joint trip to Scotland, "I shall collect authentick materials for The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.; and, if I survive him, I shall be one who will most faithfully do honour to his memory."[3] For Boswell, such "materials" were largely epistolary; his work referenced and reproduced hundreds of letters to and from Johnson.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, as we saw in chapter 3 in the context of Richardson's novels, discussions of letter writing vacillated between these poles: personal letters were either premeditated hypocrisy or unmediated windows into the writer's heart. As the genre of biography matured in the mid- to late eighteenth century, it highlighted the compilation of letters as a key evidentiary mechanism, using letters to connect an individual's history to a larger social or intellectual "world." Like Richardson, the authors of biographies often stressed their editorial rather than authorial roles, drawing attention to the research processes of compilation and organization that allowed a written "life" to take shape. In Boswell's advertisement to the first edition of the *Life of Johnson* (1791), for example, he passively wrote of his own process, "I have collected and arranged the materials of which these volumes are composed," and the title page highlighted the inclusion of "a series of [johnson's] epistolary correspondence and conversations with many eminent persons; and various original pieces of his composition, never before published."[4] Biographers not only used letters to obtain information but also laid out their texts in epistolary form, presenting full epistles to and from their subjects; letter-based narration allowed them to incorporate both the to-the-moment style and the focus on factual authentication that were key elements of the letter genre in the eighteenth century. In the middle decades of the century, as chapter 3 showed, the

letter was increasingly depicted as the closest written approximation of oral conversation—and, in some cases, as superior to speech for the forethought it afforded. Its growing association with the body, and particularly the female body, positioned it at the intersection of public expression and domestic life. Eighteenth-century biographers drew on these connections to use the letter as a bridge not only from manuscript but also from embodied speech to print, presenting the process of sending and receiving letters as a proxy for lived experience. The constantly unfolding temporality of correspondence, in which each letter included an expectation of ongoing response, allowed a biographer to depict development over time. Letters enabled the inclusion of multiple perspectives: by citing a letter, the biographer used the correspondent to "authenticate the Anecdotes with your name," as Boswell put it in a letter requesting details about Johnson.[5] The letter once again became a method of virtual witnessing, one that was more reliable than a single-authored account.

This chapter will examine the generic contexts for Johnson's and Boswell's influential biographical works to argue that the biography was yet another of the eighteenth century's prominent new print genres that used the bridge genre of the letter to establish its core epistemological and narratological methods. Eighteenth-century biography departed from earlier forms of life writing with an attention to realistic detail and daily activities, a mode in which the printed letter had already proved useful. In particular, as I will show, biography drew from the conventions of two seventeenth- and eighteenth-century life-writing genres: the "literary remains," selections of the papers of recently deceased scholars and authors; and the epistolary travelogue, a set of letters whose goal was to reveal the character of the traveler alongside that of the traveled-to land. While letter collections such as these offered the illusion of personal correspondence, their contents were often written months or years after a voyage, put into epistolary form, or culled and edited for the press. As the letter bridged manuscript and printed life writing, therefore, it signaled that a key premise of the biography—and particularly of the memoirs of an author, a special category of eighteenth-century "lives"—would be to interrogate the interactions between public and private selves: between, as Johnson put it, "writing to the world" and writing "a letter addressed to a single mind."[6] "The world" continued to be a media realm of circulating letters, and the metonymic connection between a person and his or her letters allowed a body of correspondence to encapsulate a life in its social and historical context. The generic history of the traveler's or scholar's collection helped letters migrate from documenting the global world to exploring the "world" of literary cor-

respondences. "Lives" populated the eighteenth-century world with characters who were revealed through their letters.

Focusing on the connections between antiquarian and travel writing, and Johnson's and Boswell's discussions of biography and own biographical texts, I show how a media-sensitive attention to the genre of the letter opened up new modes of life writing in the mid- to late eighteenth century. While Johnson espoused a preference for manuscript biographical sources, Boswell went further in his adherence to an epistolary methodology in content and form, fully exploiting the potentialities of the letter as a bridge genre. As he wrote, a documentary chronology based on Johnson's "own minutes, letters or conversation" offered the "perfect mode of writing any man's life," which was not so much writing as editing: "interweaving what he privately wrote, and said and thought."[7] Using letters as both evidence and narrative device, he cemented a new model for how to research and report: the genre of the "life" became a collection of letters with narrative connective tissue. He described his writing in such terms, arguing that "instead of melting down my materials into one mass, and constantly speaking in my own person, by which I might have appeared to have more merit in the execution of the work," he would use narration only to "explain, connect, and supply. . . [Johnson's] own minutes, letters, or conversation."[8] While the *Life of Johnson* is famous for its transcriptions of its subject's conversational *bons mots*, it arguably relied more heavily on epistolary evidence, as Boswell admitted there were many years in which he and Johnson did not meet, or meetings after which he did not take careful notes. The physical appearance of letters was therefore as important as their content, as they displayed to readers the methods by which biographical authenticity could be aspired to if never fully achieved. Letters allowed readers to take on the role of the biographer, sorting and comparing different versions of events.

Positioning letters as the best media support for documenting day-to-day life was a way to turn gossipy conversation into archival text, and therefore to claim a researched factual account rather than impressionistic memoirs. Boswell included letters in nearly every year of his "chronological series of Johnson's life," a method that interjected dozens of writers into his text.[9] Piozzi, meanwhile, based her 1786 biography, *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson LL.D.*, not on Johnson's letters to her, which she published separately in 1788, but on her commonplace book, a fact upon which her critics founded charges of bias and misrepresentation. While the genre of the "anecdote," particularly following Piozzi, threatened to pull Johnson into the realm of the feminine

and domestic, the letter maintained its ambivalent gendered status: although often described as a female domain, it remained the central means for circulating facts in the male-dominated realms of science, news, politics, scholarship, literature, and the military. Once again drawing manuscript sources into print, epistolary biographies emphasized the intermediate forms of personal storytelling, such as letter writing and journal keeping, in which almost every literate person engaged and which could eventually add up to a birth-to-death "life." They drew on readers' own lived epistolary interactions to show how letters could structure experience, providing periodicity and networked connections along with individual insight. The continuing public-private nature of letters allowed them to serve as a bridge between the subject's personal thoughts and unseen behavior on the one hand and his or her public persona on the other.

In their biographical writings, both Johnson and Boswell dwelled on the question of what constituted evidence for narrating a life, once again engaging in the epistolary metadiscourse that we have seen as central to eighteenth-century letter writing. They often emphasized a category of manuscript documents, predominantly letters, over both oral testimony and printed sources. My argument thus diverges from Alvin Kernan's influential analysis of Johnson as the paradigmatic figure of eighteenth-century print literature, "a model, both in motive and ways of working, of the social construction of letters in the age of print," to explore his attention to handwritten genres.[10] Johnson wrote in the *Rambler* in 1750, outlining the new eighteenth-century understanding of biography, that "the business of the biographer is often to pass slightly over those performances and incidents which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts into domestic privacies, and display the minute details of daily life."[11] But it was questionable whether oral history could accurately transmit such "minute details," since "the incidents which give excellence to biography are of a volatile and evanescent kind, such as soon escape the memory, and are rarely transmitted by tradition."[12] The genre of the letter was an obvious mechanism for recording "minute details" and therefore for transforming a "life" from a series of dates to an interesting narrative. In pursuing this method, however, Johnson and Boswell participated in an emerging back-formation of manuscript as natural, authentic, and probative—even as they maintained the intersection of handwritten documents with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century print culture.[13] That is, manuscript began to be seen as historical and prior to print, rather than as actively interacting with it. This tendency was underscored in another literary debate in which Johnson was a key player: his

denial of the authenticity of the poems of Ossian, which he expressed through his repeated injunction that the poems' "translator," James Macpherson, "produce the manuscripts" for public inspection.[14] Johnson denied the existence outright of not only the Ossian manuscripts, but also any ancient texts in Scottish Gaelic: "Where men write, they will write to one another, and some of their letters, in families studious of their ancestry, will be kept. In Wales there are many manuscripts."[15] In this case, letters were necessary to prove not personal character but national tradition: to Johnson, the ancient Scots' presumed lack of letters indicated their lack of writing full stop. Manuscript was the missing link between oral tradition and contemporary print.

By privileging letter writing as a necessary element of biographical reportage and, more broadly, of historical lineage, Johnson and Boswell treated letters as not only evidence but also metonym for introspective authenticity. The correspondence of an author showed a writer writing, necessarily revealing individual information. But these biographers also bumped up against new norms regarding the privacy of letters, as some correspondents and critics objected that such personal documents were inappropriate for print. At the same time as letters continued to serve as a bridge between media, therefore, there also began to be a resistance to such mixture, and even the early decline of the bridging function. As letters were reinforced as windows into the biographical subject's thoughts and feelings, they became the quintessential manuscript documents, even when printed in a collection. The generic changes that biography underwent in the second half of the eighteenth century show the focus on the letter as a genre of proof that was also central to the newspaper and periodical, but as a new kind of personal rather than public proof. Biographers emphasized the revelatory power of letters and thus incorporated into the genre the epistolary tension by which, in Boswell's words, "though I tell nothing but the truth, I have still kept in mind that the whole truth is not always to be exposed."[16] As eighteenth-century biographers vacillated between proclaiming the integrity of manuscript letters and questioning the veracity of their writers, the epistolary negotiation between revelation and concealment would be written into the history of the biography genre.

## "The Persons Ought to Be Rotten First": Biography's Beginnings in the "Literary Remains"

In the early eighteenth century, readers began encountering "lives" across a variety of factual and fictional genres. The interest of the novel in individual experience has long been a critical commonplace, and scholars such as J. Paul

Hunter and Michael McKeon have shown how that interest developed out of individually oriented forms of print such as criminal biographies, saints' lives, travel narratives, secret histories, periodical question-and-answer columns, and letter collections.[17] But public attention to the lives of real noteworthy people was both old and new. Biography, an account of a significant figure, was a classical genre that flourished in the form of hagiography, stories of the lives and martyrdoms of the Christian saints. After the Reformation, this group expanded to include Protestant martyrs, a process that culminated in John Foxe's instant classic *Acts and Monuments*, or "Book of Martyrs."[18] Early modern written "lives" focused on exemplarity and pedagogical usefulness rather than historical precision, and they were usually found in anthologies rather than as stand-alone accounts; the emerging Enlightenment model instead emphasized individual development and linear narrative.[19] By the early seventeenth century secular figures such as politicians, scientists, travelers, and scholars began to be the subjects of biographies and autobiographies, and the market continued to diversify over the course of the eighteenth century.[20] Donald A. Stauffer notes a move toward introspection and variety: "Biography during the eighteenth century became increasingly subjective in its emphasis, detailed in its manner, and democratic in its choice of heroes."[21] Likewise, Mark Salber Phillips argues that biography, like historical writing more generally, was re-conceptualized along sentimental lines, so that its goals became the evocation of inner life and the reader's emotional connection to the subject. In this way biography, traditionally a less prestigious genre, claimed precedence over history for its ability to get close to the individual.[22]

Literary biography became a particular concern of the eighteenth century, as the emergence of professional authorship and growth of the book marketplace, along with the focus on inner experience, encouraged an interest in individual writers. Authors benefited from the new openness in subject matter, which was also driven by print market dynamics: the most common occasion for producing an account of an author was a new edition of his or her works, to which a prefatory "life" would be appended.[23] Deidre Shauna Lynch argues that this system encouraged readers to identify with the author being profiled, forming an affective connection through the "personalization of literature."[24] Concomitant with this emotional relation to specific authors, the period saw a growing attention to documentary evidence and minute facts; for example, debates about the life of Shakespeare increasingly turned on the authenticity of archival materials, whereas in the seventeenth century Thomas Sprat had suppressed and possibly destroyed some of the personal letters of

his biographical subject Thomas Cowley on the grounds of decorum.[25] Readers apparently wanted greater introspective detail about the figures whose "lives" they consumed, and they cared that those details be accurate. The collection and presentation of letters, with their strengthening ties to the personal and individual, helped maintain the appearance of authenticity.

This focus on documenting individual lives with more accuracy and particularity coincided with other documentary impulses in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The founding of the Royal Society in 1660 was followed by that of the Society of Antiquaries in 1707, with a royal charter granted in 1751.[26] The society operated through methods remarkably similar to those of the Royal Society, described in chapter 1, and the two groups' membership overlapped significantly. Like the Royal Society, the Society of Antiquaries requested correspondence from its members or other interested parties around the country and globe, and these letters would be read before the society before a selection of them was printed; from 1770 the group published its own journal, *Archaeologia*. Rosemary Sweet argues that antiquarianism embodied many of the epistemological concerns of the eighteenth century, as empirical facts about the past were seen to illuminate a modernizing, commercializing nation: "The nineteenth-century emphasis upon empiricism and documentation arose directly out of antiquarian methods."[27] Antiquarianism may be seen as part of a larger turn away from classical historiography, with its emphasis on a chronological series of public events collected from textual accounts, and toward an empiricist history of culture, customs, religions, and peoples that relied on physical and documentary sources; as Arnaldo Momigliano has argued, in the eighteenth century there is "on the one hand the demand for better evidence and for stricter scrutiny of the available evidence, and on the other hand the interest in problems of a different kind."[28] Just as biographies called for more detail and accuracy, even as their subject matter diversified, so did the history of the British Isles expand in both scope and evidence base.

While the Society of Antiquaries took as its purview anything relating to the history of Great Britain prior to the reign of James I, its members often produced what we would now see as literary biographies of their contemporaries. They and other hobby antiquarians of the period seem to have seamlessly transitioned from documenting the history of Great Britain to documenting its historians. That is, they turned their attention not only to the topography, monuments, and antiquities of the nation, but also to their own activities while collecting such information. The task of the antiquarian came to include writing biographies of prominent residents of the regions he was

documenting—who frequently comprised scholars and writers—and of other antiquarians, and to leave his papers in such a state as to facilitate posthumous publication of his own "life." This was primarily a masculine practice, situated within the scholarly community and relying on semi-public letters between fellow academics. Antiquarians' archival and documentary skills lent themselves to the historical reconstruction of a biography, and they had extensive, pre-existing correspondence networks upon which to draw when seeking further information. They were among the first literary biographers, and their early efforts would provide a foundation as the genre expanded in the eighteenth century.

The late seventeenth-century antiquarian John Aubrey's extensive collection of notes, drafts, and essays now known as *Brief Lives* was not recognized as an achievement in biography, and particularly literary biography, at the time of its production. Aubrey (1626–97) never printed his biographical writings or the vast majority of his other antiquarian research, although he circulated his manuscripts among scholarly friends and left his papers to the newly formed Ashmolean Museum. It was not until the mid- to late eighteenth century that Aubrey's works were rediscovered, and the attention then went primarily to his lives of writers—which include otherwise-lost personal details of Hobbes, Dryden, Locke, Butler, and Marvell—although his work surveyed a range of aristocrats, soldiers, natural philosophers, mathematicians, and artists. The first print edition of Aubrey's work was 1797's *The Oxford Cabinet, Consisting of Engravings from Original Pictures, in the Ashmolean Museum . . . with Biographical Anecdotes, by John Aubrey*, but eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors had little success making sense of the manuscripts, as they "attempted to recast Aubrey's text, one deeply responsible to Baconian principles of accumulation and empiricism, as late-eighteenth-century literary biography and literary anecdote."[29] Aubrey, however, never produced a fair copy of his work and displayed his acquisitive research methods on the handwritten pages, showcasing a vital social and intellectual circle rather than the complete "lives" that would be expected by the late eighteenth century.[30]

Although Aubrey did not focus particularly on collecting his subjects' autograph letters, only a few of which appear in the three volumes' hundreds of pages, his research methods were crucially epistolary. His primary role in the intellectual culture of the day was as the hub of a correspondence network: "Aubrey positively prided himself on playing this role of co-ordinator in the intellectual circles in which he moved."[31] He used letters to amass information, and he treated his manuscripts as letters to be circulated for annotation

and emendation, for example adding a dedicatory letter to his friend, Oxford scholar Anthony Wood, noting, "I doe not here repeat anything already published (to the best of my remembrance) and I fancy my self all along discoursing with you."[32] He laid out what he described as his third draft of the *Life of Mr Thomas Hobbes* by leaving each opening's verso blank for entries from his correspondents, while the recto contained his own text; often, he would write a question on the verso that Wood or another reader would answer on the same page (figure 4.1).[33] As Kate Bennett has argued, while Aubrey did not pursue print publication, apart from one small volume of *Miscellanies* at the end of his life, his "preferred form of publication" was to leave his papers to the Ashmolean.[34] In doing so, he was helping to establish procedures for compiling antiquarians' papers and making them available for future generations. Composing a "life" was a process of collecting manuscript "Materialls"; his research methods gave him the assurance to write of his texts, "I beleeve never any [Lives] in England were delivered so faithfully and with so good autority."[35] He left the epistolary interactions that furnished such materials visible to future readers.

For Aubrey, the composition of either biographical or topographical notices was a fundamentally collaborative exercise. Even the more finished of his productions, some of which feature manuscript title pages and prefaces, include multiple hands adding commentary and corrections in the margins, while the collections of his "minutes"—notes on particular topics—bring together his own research, slips of paper with information contributed by other antiquarians, letters sent and received providing further background, extracts from books, drawings and engravings, astrological charts, and printed documents. To collect biographical data, Aubrey relied on the same scholarly and antiquarian networks that he used to gather information for his *Naturall Historie of Wiltshire*, *A Perambulation of Surrey*, and *Hypomenata Antiquaria*,[36] and in fact these historical-topographical works also featured biographical notices. In the case of either places or people, the manuscripts reveal similarly epistolary investigative methods. For example, a note on the title page of the *Naturall Historie of Wiltshire Part I*$^{st}$ conveys the information that "Mr. Ed. Lloyd [Edward Lhwyd] ^of the [Ashmolean] museum^ tells me, there are petrified shells, both in South, & North Wales," while an included letter from antiquarian John Ray warns, "I think, (if you can give me leave to be free with you) that you are a little too inclinable to credit strange relations."[37] Meanwhile, a letter included in *Brief Lives* from Randall Isaacson, about his father, Henry Isaacson, notes, "In all probabillity he was borne in St Kathrin Cole-

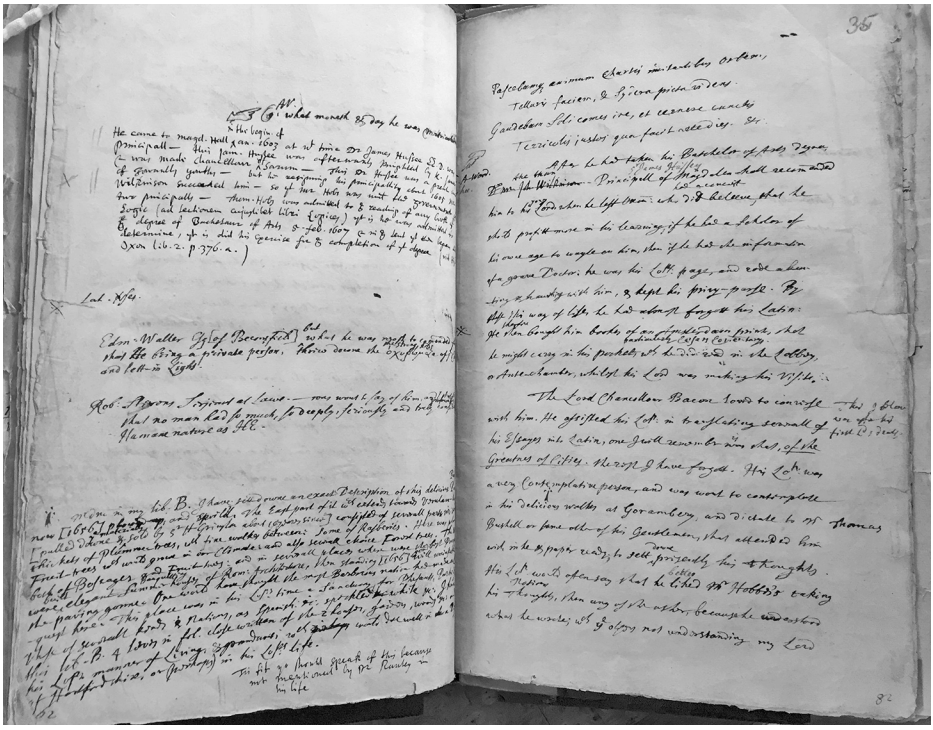


*Figure 4.1.* An opening from Aubrey's *Life of Mr Thomas Hobbes* shows the material methods he used to collect information on his subject, as he posed queries on the verso related to information on the recto. Next to the manicule at the top of the page Aubrey asks, "what moneth and day he was matriculated," while Anthony Wood answers below, "He came to Magd. Hall ^the begin. of^ an. 1603." Aubrey Manuscripts, MS. Aubrey 9, fols. 34$^{v}$–35$^{r}$, The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford.

mans parrish my Grandfather having lived so long tyme there . . . I never heard any thing the contrary."[38] Rather than deciding on one correct interpretation, Aubrey presented his contributors' "probable" accounts and reflections on his own historical accuracy side by side.

Aubrey's methods of epistolary research and manuscript publication often led him to comment on the media status of his texts, and while he argued that many of the details in the *Lives* were too intimate to be printed, he also portrayed manuscript as both public and professional. In his commentary on his work, Aubrey emphasized that—while he and his sources could produce authoritative information, as they knew many of the figures personally—it would not be appropriate to publish the information until decades in the future.

Aubrey noted that his research on earlier figures was necessarily constrained because of missing manuscript materials: "'Tis pity that such minutes had not been taken 100 yeares since or more: for want whereof many worthy mens names & inventions are swallowed up in oblivion." But, he continued regarding his own "minutes," "These arcana are not fitt to flie abroad, till about 30 yeares hence; for the author & the Persons ought to be rotten first."[39] Printing, however, was not the only concern; Aubrey also worried about the public nature of epistolary circulation, writing to Wood in June 1681, "It is not fitt for *all* the Lives to be perused by very few besides your selfe, because I speake too much trueth of some that are yet alive."[40] In July 1682 he was more specific, writing, "I doe *earnestly* desire you not to lett my MSS of Lives to goe out of your hands; for there is Scandalum Magnatum . . . that I should heape coals of fire on my head."[41] And when he discovered that Wood himself had published much of the information, and excised dozens of pages from the *Lives*' second volume, Aubrey entered an angry note headed "INGRATITUDE" into the manuscript, writing, "This part the second Mr Wood haz gelded from pag. 9. to pag. 44 & other pagg. too are wanting, wherein are contained Trueths; but such as I entrusted no body with the sight of, but himselfe: whom I thought I might have entrusted with my Life. There are severall papers, that may cutt my throate."[42] The nascent field of seventeenth-century biography, which Aubrey was developing as he went along, held that a biographical subject, like other antiquarian items of interest, should predecease the historical account of his or her life. There was apparently reason to fear serious consequences for publicizing still-living "lives," although none of the dire consequences Aubrey predicted came to pass.

While Aubrey worried about the effects of what he had written, he also saw his documentary efforts in creating the *Lives* as a kind of duty. As he wrote in 1680, "The offices of a Panegyrist & Historian are much different. A Life, is a short Historie: and there minutenes of ^a^ famous person is gratefull. I never yet knew a Witt (unles he were a piece of an Antiquary) write a proper Epitaph."[43] The subject should be dead—the "life" was an epitaph—but it should also be pursued with antiquarian minuteness. By the mid-eighteenth century, such procedures had become expected practice for antiquarian biographers. The midcentury correspondence between John Loveday (1711–89), gentleman antiquarian, and Andrew Coltée Ducarel (1713–85), a lawyer and the librarian of Lambeth Palace, reveals the by-then-standardized methods for compiling the papers and writing the "life" of an antiquarian. Both men were associated with the Society of Antiquaries, and, although they first met while students at

Oxford, began a correspondence in 1761 following the death of one of their fellows, John Ward, scholar and biographer of the professors of Gresham College. In May 1761, having heard that Loveday had purchased Ward's papers, Ducarel wrote to him hinting that he should put the papers to public use: "Every person present [at the Society of Antiquaries] earnestly wished to see some memoirs of that great & good man Dr. Ward laid before the Society—I hope their wishes will not prove fruitless—but that, Sir, must be left to you."[44] This opening initiated a nearly 25-year correspondence in which the men traded antiquarian news, copies out of their own books, and printed works while collaborating on biographies of members of their learned circle.

Like Aubrey, Loveday and Ducarel employed the same skills in assembling information for a "life" as they did in collecting other items of antiquarian interest. In their biographical efforts, they focused on manuscript archival documents as the necessary evidence for writing such accounts, and put off writing when it appeared that such "materials" were unavailable. They also conducted the majority of their research via letter. Loveday at first deflected Ducarel's suggestion that he bore responsibility for contributing to a biography of Ward. While acknowledging, "It is really to be wished, that every eminent member of the A.S. [Antiquarian Society] were, on his decease, as well accounted for, as is Dr. Browne Willis"—whose printed "life" Ducarel had enclosed with his first letter—he continued, "Dr. Ward's papers do by no means furnish me with a sufficient stock of materials for writing memoirs."[45] This demurral led to a four-year silence, but in 1765 Ducarel wrote again to tell Loveday that historian Thomas Birch would take on the project: "Tis now 3 weekes since Dr. Birch & some other respectable Members of the Royal Antiquarian Societies dined with me—we talked of Dr. Ward, we all pressed Dr. Birch seriously to consider this affair contributing ^at the same time^ all the anecdotes we could recollect." Ducarel sent Loveday Birch's draft biography for comparison with Ward's papers, still in Loveday's possession.[46] To assist Birch, Ducarel collected "curious additions" from Loveday, as well as a letter from Ward's servant, an anecdote from "Mr. Gawler one of Dr. Wards pupils," and a copy of Ward's epitaph, concluding, "Dr. Birch has now every material that could be procured relating to the Professor."[47] In the same letter, he communicated some additional "literary intelligence," writing that "the account of Dr. Thorpe's Life will be drawn up by his ^worthy^ sone whom you may perhaps remember at University College."[48] Among his "antiquarian news" was ongoing discussion of the stream of biographies issuing from the press, to which they hoped to join their "memorial of the good professor," Ward.[49]

However, soon after completing a draft of Ward's life, Birch was killed in a fall from his horse, an event that Ducarel reported in a letter of 11 January 1766. Ducarel noted that "he was, at this Day to have given me the papers relative to Professor Ward to have been fair copied, by one of my Clerks, first for your use & then for the Printer";[50] he also immediately began making plans for a life of Birch, writing on 16 January that Matthew Maty, Birch's literary executor and successor as secretary of the Royal Society, "will oblige the world with an account of Dr. Birch."[51] While they considered this life of Birch, which Loveday asserted "will be very acceptable to the public," they continued discussion of the prior text—to be printed in London later that year—debating whether to call it "An Account of" or "The Life of" Ward.[52] They were versed in the genre conventions of literary biography and used their correspondence circles to collect the manuscript materials necessary for such texts. As Ducarel wrote in March 1766, "Dr. Matty [*sic*] has found a Diary of Dr. Birch's Life, in his own Handwriting from his Birth till within a few Days of his Death—I saw it this morning & he will give us a Life of Dr. Birch in a short time."[53] These scholars' research methods, again like Aubrey's, depended on epistolary connections, but they and other antiquarians of the period went further than seventeenth-century memoirists in privileging the autograph manuscript materials of their subjects. Ducarel claimed that he had arranged the Lambeth Library so well that "there is not one single MS. or scrap of paper, but is bound, digested & regulated by me ^in such a manner^ that it may be come at, in the space of one minute."[54] Birch's earlier *Life of Henry Prince of Wales, Eldest Son of James I* (1760), advertised on its title page that it was "Compiled chiefly from his own Papers, and other Manuscripts, never before published," with Birch adding in the preface that he had undertaken "the perusal of no inconsiderable collection of original letters, written by him, or addressed to him." He went on: "Letters are the most solid foundation of history."[55] The new documentary impulses represented by eighteenth-century antiquarianism depended upon a view of manuscript as authentic and probative and on correspondence networks as the most reliable sources of information.

## The Traveling Self in the Global Post

If antiquarianism constituted one important strand of biographical writing in the eighteenth century, it was, as we have seen, primarily invested in the lives of the dead. From Aubrey to Ducarel, and on to Boswell, it was considered unseemly or even scandalous to publish a biography or letter collection prior to the subject's death, particularly if it contained the kinds of personal details

that would make such works interesting and marketable. But another strand also gained in prominence through the century, and it offered an avenue for publishing (auto)biographical writings while the author/subject was still alive. Epistolary travelogues were a stalwart element of the print industry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as they offered a flexible venue to address a wide variety of nominally historical or anthropological topics. From the common use of the letter in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for reporting foreign affairs, whether in diplomatic correspondence or the newspaper, it was an easy step to printing a collection of letters describing a country or geographical area. As Clare Brant argues, the public-private slipperiness of letters allowed travelogues to look both inward toward the letter writer and outward toward the world: "Travel puts identity in motion; letters were a genre that allowed the borders of the self to be renegotiated. Letters were not simply a medium for establishing cultural difference, but for questioning it, qualifying it, overcoming it, updating it and erasing it."[56] The "authenticity effect" of letters located reliability in the individual eyewitness account,[57] blurring distinctions between objective and subjective knowledge. This process constantly turned attention from the place and toward the person, particularly if he or she included self-referential epistolary features; as Michael McKeon notes, "The emphasis upon eyewitness experience puts a heavy premium on the psychology of the author."[58] In presenting letters as a descriptive account of a place, travel writers also had to find means to present themselves as trustworthy and authoritative, a process that required ongoing management of the author's epistolary persona.

An epistolary travelogue, therefore, was not necessarily a biography, and its letters were not necessarily personal: it was meant to be an outsider's account of the places being visited. The form offered narrative looseness and flexibility, allowing the author to pursue various threads without the injunction to weave them into a continuous biographical whole. Felicity Nussbaum has argued that eighteenth-century autobiographies did not aspire to narrative unity: they were "less quests toward self-discovery in which the narrator reveals herself or himself than repetitive serial representations of particular moments held together by the narrative 'I.'"[59] With their attention to letters, both biographies and autobiographies sought to authorize knowledge within a correspondence community, drawing on the history of the letter as a transmitter of news, while still privileging the first-person perspective. The epistolary travelogue simultaneously depended upon and deflected attention from the reporting "I," relying on the personal reputation of the writer while

nominally focusing on his surroundings. It drew on the established features of both manuscript and printed letters—assuming readers' experience with newspapers, periodicals, and novels—to position the letter as a source of intermingled personal and public information. The letter constantly transmitted information from the writer to "the world," connecting readers to the realm of circulating correspondence. As the postal system spread outward across the globe, collections of travelers' letters returned news from a fellow Briton's perspective.

One of the eighteenth century's best known models was Gilbert Burnet's *Some Letters Containing an Account of what Seemed most Remarkable in Switzerland, Italy, &c.* (1686), which went through three editions within a year of publication, occasioned responses and reflections, and saw further reprints in 1724, 1725, 1737, 1738, and 1750, ultimately as *Bishop Burnet's Travels*. This transition in titles reflects the epistolary travelogue's negotiation between the objective and subjective: beginning as an empirical, impressionistic account—sent to "R.B. . . . Fellow of the Royal Society," a barely disguised Robert Boyle—of what the author found "most remarkable," the book became over the course of the eighteenth century associated with the authorial persona of Burnet (1643–1715). The work, consisting of five long letters, opens with a conventional move of epistolary travelogues, the deflection of historical authority and appeal to personal communication. Burnet assumed that the epistolary travelogue was a typically masculine form of reporting; as he wrote in the first line, "It is so common to write Travels, that for one who has seen so little, and as it were in haste, it may look like a presumptuous Affectation to be reckoned among Voyagers, if he attempts to say any thing upon so short a Ramble, and concerning Places so much visited, and by consequence so well known." However, he continued, he had enjoyed "opportunities that do not offer themselves to all that travel" that provided a pretext for writing, "but I will avoid saying such things as occurr in ordinary Books, for which I refer you to the Prints."[60] Again, the letter bridged manuscript and print to offer a different viewpoint from that of a printed book of history or politics. Burnet's first letter then comprised a nearly 50-page-long account of the political, economic, and religious history of Lyons, Grenoble, Geneva, Bern, Solothurn, Freiburg, and Zurich. While he presented the narrative as a personal letter written on the go, the public nature of the content saved Burnet from a charge of epistolary vanity or unseemliness, enabling an uncontroversial publication.

Despite the genre's use of the increasingly feminized letter form, women writing epistolary travelogues saw themselves as entering a male sphere, since

the majority of those with the ability to travel, and thus to produce such texts, were male diplomats or Grand Tourists. The eighteenth century's most famous epistolary travel writer, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, adopted many of the generic traits exemplified by Burnet in her *Turkish Embassy Letters*, but as a woman she faced a more complicated path to publication.[61] Like Burnet, Montagu claimed avenues of access not available to other travelers—here on account of her gender—while demonstrating her awareness that she was writing in an established, largely masculine literary genre. She included letters much longer than those that would normally be sent in the mail and worked to survey a range of topics. At the same time, she signaled the more autobiographical nature of the work by never printing it in her lifetime, only preparing a manuscript fair copy for posthumous publication.[62] She made her letters appear more personal than had Burnet's, deploying salutations and subscriptions and making frequent second-person reference to her correspondents. The text first published in 1763 was based on a two-volume manuscript fair copy that she compiled from her journal and from transcripts of the letters she had sent while traveling to Turkey with her diplomat husband, Edward Wortley Montagu, from 1716 to 1718.[63] Although few of the mailed letters survive for comparison, it appears that she edited the texts and combined letters, sometimes altering or disguising the recipient.[64] While the letter form stressed the personal integrity of the writer's observations, the genre of the travelogue allowed for this kind of editing in the pursuit of narrative and historical accuracy; contemporary readers would assume that at least some alterations had been made.

Throughout the work, however, Montagu played against the conventions of epistolary travelogues to emphasize the integrity of her account. She dismissed almost all previous reports as inaccurate because based on inadequate sources and incomplete experience. As she wrote to the Abbé Antonio Conti, "'Tis certain we have but very imperfect relations of the manners and Religion of these people, this part of the World being seldom visited but by merchants who mind little but their own Affairs, or Travellers who make too short a stay to be able to report any thing exactly of their own knowledge."[65] Elsewhere she ridiculed "the common Voyage-writers who are very fond of speaking of what they don't know," as well as "that worthy author [Jean] Dumont, who has writ with equal ignorance and confidence."[66] Montagu largely referred to her gender when claiming insider knowledge. While she did not presume that the letter was a feminine genre, she argued that she had access to Turkish women no other writer could obtain; many of her letters' recipients were female friends

and relatives. Her voyeuristic letter displaying the "stark naked" beauties of the bath house was couched in these terms, as she closed the letter by writing, "I am sure I have now entertaind you with an Account of such a sight as you never saw in your Life and what no book of travells could inform you of. 'Tis no less than Death for a Man to be found in one of these places."[67] But she also presented her advantages in class terms; as a high-ranking woman and the wife of a diplomat, she was invited into spaces that other travelers could not access. Montagu's individual experiences were a necessary part of her historical reliability, as her biography helped explain her eyewitness accounts.

At the same time, Montagu further enhanced her reliability by freely admitting what she did not or could not know. Again, this was often a question of gender: she self-deprecatingly demurred as to her knowledge of military affairs and architecture, while offering lengthy descriptions, for example, of local fashions. As she wrote early in her trip, while in Leipzig, "This is a fortify'd Town, but I avoid ever mentioning fortifications, being sensible that I know not how to speak of 'em." Or later, after visiting the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul: "This is a dull, imperfect description of this celebrated building, but I understand Architecture so Little that I am affraid of talking Nonsense in endeavouring to speak of it particularly."[68] Despite her apparent lack of theoretical knowledge, she asserted her expertise based on first-hand experience. In a letter written from Adrianople, for example, she voiced greater confidence, writing, "I suppose you have read in most of our Accounts of Turkey that their Houses are the most miserable pieces of building in the World. I can speak very learnedly on that Subject, having been in so many of 'em, and I assure you tis no such thing."[69] Modesty statements were standard elements of eighteenth-century letters, as they maintained the balance of power and respect between letter writer and recipient. Montagu was versed in the norms of the kinds of semi-public correspondence that made up the *Turkish Embassy Letters*, in which she displayed her knowledge, erudition, and access to an epistolary circle.[70] By admitting what she did not know, she made her other statements contrastingly honest and reliable.

Montagu was aware that her notorious public persona might compromise the reception of her work, and she used the form of the epistolary travelogue to remake her image, casting herself as an erudite but modest wife and mother.[71] She frequently contrasted herself to both the female authors of romances and the male authors of travels, writing, "'Tis my regard to Truth and not Lazynesse that I do not entertain you with as many prodigys as other Travellers use to divert their Readers with. . . . Would you have me write novelles like

the Countess of D'Aunois? and is it not better to tell you a plain Truth."[72] And because, unlike many other travel writers, she chose not to publish in her lifetime but rather to prepare the work for posthumous publication, the status of the letters as her manuscript "literary remains" gave them credence that those of the political pamphleteer Burnet lacked; they presented a view of Montagu as much as of Turkey. As an author writing in the *Monthly Review* in May 1763 noted of the letters, "They form, indeed, an admirable picture, a striking resemblance, of the celebrated Lady who wrote them . . . [and] have not the air of being wrote for the press, as were many of the labored Letters which are so much admired in the correspondence of Pope and Swift."[73] However, as we now know, the letters were in fact written, or at least edited and rewritten, for the press, and they were geared much more toward displaying Montagu's intelligence and insight than toward revealing her intimate character. For Montagu, the circulation of letters allowed her to remain connected to "the world" even as she traversed the globe: upon arriving in Turkey she wrote, "I am now got into a new World . . . and I write to your Ladyship with some content of mind, hoping at least that you will find the charm of Novelty in my Letters."[74] But she also maintained her epistolary integrity, writing to another correspondent, who had reported a rumor about Montagu, "You may tell all the World in my Name that they are never so well inform'd of my affairs as I am my selfe."[75] The more travel writing veered toward biography, the more contentious the question of circulating and printing letters became. Yet at the same time, personal letters were increasingly constructed as the most direct way to know an author and her world.

## The Middle Way of Manuscript: Johnson on Biography

With their reliance on epistolary networks to collect and spread information, and their presentation of the letter form to offer the appearance of personal insight, "literary remains" and travelogues used letters to blur the borders between public and private selves, empirical and subjective knowledge, and gendered forms of writing. The "lives" that became a staple of eighteenth-century periodicals and books, as epitomized in the career of Johnson, picked up on the same principles of epistolary research and organization. Johnson shared these genres' competing understandings of the purpose and propriety of publishing one's own letters or those of others, and his seemingly contradictory statements about biographical writing reflect the shifting terrain of midcentury life- and letter writing. In his remarks on the genre—which Boswell described as a "species of composition . . . upon which he set the highest

value"[76]—he emphasized a novel attention to quotidian events and a privileging of manuscript materials as biographical sources. However, there emerges an ongoing tension between his overt discussions of biography and autobiography—principally in *Rambler* No. 60, *Idler* No. 84, and *Idler* No. 102—his implicit commentary, his reported remarks, and his actual practice in the *Lives of the Poets*. Johnson's "career as a biographer was almost coterminous with his career as a professional writer," as he began writing short "lives" for the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the 1730s, contributed "hints" and research to other writers' biographies, and continued writing and revising biographical accounts up until the year of his death.[77] Not surprisingly, neither his practice of nor commentary on biography was uniform over this long period.

While critics have generally discredited the idea, initiated by Johnson's early biographers Boswell and Hawkins, that he wrote the *Lives of the Poets* from memory and with little research or attention to detail,[78] his procedure there does not consistently live up to the argument advanced here that he highlighted manuscript archival evidence over either oral testimony or printed books. It is true that he often referred to letters or inserted them as evidence; in the original version of the *Life of Savage* printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1743, he noted that, in addition to personal knowledge, "the account will be continued from materials still less liable to objections; his own letters and those of his friends; some of which will be inserted in the work, and abstracts of others subjoined in the margin."[79] Here, he positioned letters as more objective than other firsthand accounts. For the most part, however, Johnson the researcher relied not on manuscript correspondence but on printed sources, which also included copies of letters. Many of the shorter *Lives* were based on entries in the *Biographia Britannica* while, for example, the primary sources for the *Life of Pope* were Owen Ruffhead's *Life of Alexander Pope* and William Warburton's *Works of Alexander Pope* (although both of these texts made claims for documentary authenticity, the first being "compiled from original manuscripts" and the second "delivered to the Editor a little before his Death").[80] But this reliance on printed references may have been as much an effect of the hybrid genre in which Johnson was working—"Prefaces, Biographical and Critical"—as of his life-writing theory. As John H. Middendorf argues, "That he often went no further for ordinary factual details underscores his emphasis more on his role as critic than biographer."[81] And Robert DeMaria Jr. asserts, "The concern for historical truth is greater in the *Lives* than anywhere in Johnson's literary criticism."[82] A post-Boswell understanding of Johnson as

primarily a biographer in the *Lives* can raise misleading assumptions about his goals for the texts.

In the periodical essays in which he addressed the topic of biography, as well as in frequent metadiscursive asides in the *Lives*, Johnson pursued a theory of the genre that would reconcile the competing evidentiary claims of oral statements and eyewitness accounts, manuscript letters and diaries, and printed "lives." Writing in *Rambler* No. 60, 13 October 1750, Johnson explained, in Horatian terms, that "no species of writing seems more worthy of cultivation than biography, since none can be more delightful or more useful."[83] Biography allowed readers to make personal connections to notable people, who were shown to have commonality with humankind, but existing biographers "rarely afford any other account than might be collected from public papers, but imagine themselves writing a life when they exhibit a chronological series of actions or preferments; and so little regard the manners or behaviour of their heroes that more knowledge may be gained of a man's real character by a short conversation with one of his servants, than from a formal and studied narrative, begun with his pedigree and ended with his funeral." A person's "real character" emerged in conversation, not public appearances. However, such conversations had to be recorded immediately to be useful to future writers, as Johnson argued that oral history could not be trusted to transmit details faithfully: "If a life be delayed till interest and envy are at an end, we may hope for impartiality, but must expect little intelligence."[84] Personal experience of the subject alone could not provide accurate knowledge, but neither could a reliance on the "public papers," as it was obvious "how soon a succession of copies will lose all resemblance of the original."[85] This essay saw no clear solution to the problem of accurate biographical reportage given the conflicting truth claims of oral, written, and printed media.

Writing in the *Idler* nine years later, Johnson repeated his assertion that "biography is, of the various kinds of narrative writing, that which is most eagerly read, and most easily applied to the purposes of life," but now he hit on the preferred method of autobiography, continuing, "Those relations are therefore commonly of most value in which the writer tells his own story."[86] He acknowledged that "self-love" might drive the autobiographer to misrepresent, but argued that this danger was outweighed by the certain knowledge of the truth he or she possessed. This assertion appears confusing coming from the debunker of epistolary transparency described above—"surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character"—but Johnson added an

important, and easily overlooked, caveat: "He that sits down calmly and voluntarily to review his life for the admonition of posterity, or to amuse himself, and leaves this account unpublished, may be commonly presumed to tell truth, since falshood cannot appease his own mind, and fame will not be heard beneath the tomb."[87] The autobiography would only be useful evidence if it remained in manuscript and became a historical document for the later researcher. In this way, we can see the emerging treatment of manuscript as more authentic and organic than print. As Johnson wrote of biographers, "He that writes the life of another is either his friend or his enemy, and wishes either to exalt his praise or aggravate his infamy," again questioning the reliability of contemporaneous printed accounts.[88] But, he argued in the *Life of Savage*, "The writer, who is not constant to his subject, quickly sinks into contempt, his satire loses its force, and his panegyrick its value, and he is only considered at one time as a flatterer, and as a calumniator at another. To avoid these imputations, it is only necessary to follow the rules of virtue, and to preserve an unvaried regard to truth."[89] By inserting or quoting from letters, the biographer established himself as a thorough researcher and impartial historian, deflecting authority to the subject and his or her correspondents. The scribal medium remained the necessary bridge between lived experience and the printed reporting of that experience.

But Johnson found that authors, in particular, were at once the best positioned and least likely to leave such archival records, since writing for them was work rather than leisure: "The author . . . leaves his life to be related by his successors, for he cannot gratify his vanity but by sacrificing his ease."[90] His recourse for this archival conundrum was to shift genres, expanding the critical sections of the *Lives* rather than extensively researching the biographies. In the advertisement to the first volume he wrote that he had composed the prefaces "with less provision of materials than might have been accumulated by longer premeditation," continuing, "Of the later writers at least I might, by attention and enquiry, have gleaned many particulars which would have diversified and enlivened my biography."[91] This apparently he was not only unable but also unwilling to do: as he wrote in *Addison*, "What is known can seldom be immediately told; and when it might be told, it is no longer known. . . . As the process of these narratives is now bringing me among my contemporaries, I begin to feel myself 'walking upon ashes under which the fire is not extinguished,' and coming to the time of which it will be proper rather to say 'nothing that is false, than all that is true.'"[92] In a less vehement style than Aubrey, Johnson expressed a similar sentiment that "lives" should not be written of the

living. First-person handwritten documents, such as diaries and letters, allowed the biographer to stake a claim for the authenticity of his posthumous account. Conventionally associated with conversation and individuality, they could preserve personal knowledge long enough for it to be shared with propriety.

Letters, therefore, formed a bridge not only from manuscript first-person documents to printed third-person biographies, but also between evidentiary mechanisms. By the mid- to late eighteenth century, they spanned the straightforward style of the early newspapers, where they conveyed immediacy and authority, and the social network of the epistolary novel, where they came to stand for personality and introspection. As they became frequent and intimate daily documents, they were able to offer insights that the more formal, business- and news-oriented letters of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries lacked. But their multiplicity continued to pose challenges, as the mediated nature of letters in both manuscript and print raised questions about their truth-value. Johnson's most extended examination of the complicated relationship of letters to lives occurs in his *Life of Pope*. As Harriet Kirkley has shown, Johnson's was the first serious attempt to trace the publication history of Pope's letters, in which Pope in 1735 maneuvered bookseller Edmund Curll into printing an already edited collection of his correspondence so that Pope himself could print a "genuine" edition, which he did in 1737.[93] For Johnson, the very printedness of the letters raised immediate ontological and epistemological questions, since publishing the letters of a living author "has in this country been done very rarely."[94] Johnson began by using the letters, which he accessed via Warburton's *Works of Alexander Pope*, as biographical evidence, but as he began noticing internal contradictions and clichéd turns of phrase he came to the conclusion that "Pope, being desirous of printing his Letters, and not knowing how to do [so], without imputation of vanity . . . contrived an appearance of compulsion; that when he could complain that his letters were surreptitiously published, he might decently and defensibly publish them himself."[95] This is, indeed, how historians now understand the letters, although firm evidence for the sequence of events involving Pope and Curll did not emerge until 1864.[96] This apparent manipulation of "epistolary integrity" colored Johnson's understanding of Pope, leading him to set "his book and his life . . . in comparison" and to find throughout "affection and ambition" that "pervert[ed]" the letters and extended to Pope's authorship more generally: "Pope may be said to write always with his reputation in his head."[97] The documents were therefore less letters than literary productions.

Johnson, that is, treats the letters as personal evidence, but not in the way

Pope would have liked: the life, as Kirkley argues, is "a paradoxically ironic portrait of one whose life and works do coincide, but not in the ways he had hoped to convince the world they coincided."[98] Assessing Pope's letters not as a window into the soul but "merely as compositions" led Johnson to his fullest disquisition on epistolary artifice.[99] Contradicting the by then conventional idea "that the true characters of men may be found in their letters," he argued, "the truth is, that such were simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the friendships only of children." Postlapsarian grown-ups were more complicated: "Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves . . . and, certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not shew to our friends."[100] As Thomas Keymer argues, Pope's reliance in his letters on "the conventions of epistolary undress" in fact undercut the image of spontaneity and sincerity he was trying to promulgate, as he appeared to be protesting too much; Johnson's clear-sighted response reveals the "two extremes between which all epistolary discourse may be supposed to lie—on one hand, the pure *un*dressed, expressive ideal; on the other, its impure, *ad*dressed, manipulative antithesis."[101] For literary biography in particular, letters were especially alluring and dangerous, since any piece of writing could be considered part of the author's textual output. Throughout the *Lives*, then, we see this complicated fluctuation in Johnson's treatment of letters, as they alternate from self-authenticating facts to questionable documents that require the interpretation of the biographer in order to make sense in the larger "life." Letters bridged the biographical anecdotes of the *Lives*, providing continuity from one period to another and showing a writer at work—writing his own life as it unfolded and communicating that information to "the world." But because a professional author, as in the case of Pope, "might originally have had publication in his mind" even when writing to a friend,[102] letters in Johnson's estimation could never serve as straightforward proof.

In the *Lives*, Johnson is concerned with the question of how to know a person, and he relies on a combination of manuscript and printed biographical information combined with his own close reading of the author's works. Just a few years before beginning the essays, he had published his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775), a work in which he asked similar questions about how one could know a place. His description of his authorial task in the *Journey*, and excuse for making "diminutive observations," is remarkably like his overview of biography in the *Rambler* and *Idler*: "It must be remembered, that life consists not of a series of illustrious actions, or elegant enjoyments; the greater part of our time passes in compliance with necessi-

ties, in the performance of daily duties. . . . The true state of every nation is the state of common life."[103] With an antiquarian impulse, he hoped to see "a people of peculiar appearance, and a system of antiquated life," although he found that he and Boswell "came thither too late to see what we expected."[104] The work was in a way an epistolary travelogue, as he based his account on the long diary letters he had sent to Piozzi, then Hester Lynch Thrale.[105] But throughout the trip, he interrogated the evidence he was presented with of Highland life past and present. The question of whether to trust the folk stories and local histories he was being told led him to reflect continually on the media of historical transmission. "In nations, where there is hardly the use of letters," he wrote, monuments and spectacles had historical use: "Their only registers are stated observances and practical representations." But, he continued, "Pageants, and processions, and commemorations, gradually shrink away, as better methods come into use of recording events, and preserving rights."[106] He denied that oral tradition could accurately maintain historical knowledge, arguing, "Written learning is a fixed luminary, which, after the cloud that had hidden it has past away, is again bright in its proper station. Tradition is but a meteor, which, if once it falls, cannot be rekindled." He grew more specific: "Where the chiefs of the Highlands have found the histories of their descent is difficult to tell; for no *Earse* genealogy was ever written."[107] Echoing the concerns in his commentaries on biography that personal knowledge quickly decays, Johnson questioned the ability of the Scots to transmit historical information without written records.

Johnson's extended discussion of the media of historical transmission was a prelude to the most controversial part of the *Journey* (apart from the claim that there were no trees in Scotland): his denial of the authenticity of the Ossian poems. He and Boswell, he asserts, continually asked people to show them poetic manuscripts, but none were forthcoming.[108] "I suppose," he concluded, "my opinion of the poems of Ossian is already discovered. I believe they never existed in any other form than that which we have seen. The editor, or author, never could shew the original; nor can it be shewn by any other." Once again, the supposed lack of ancient Scottish Gaelic writing was proof positive; as he continued, "It would be easy to shew [the original] if he had it; but whence could it be had? It is too long to be remembered, and the language formerly had nothing written."[109] Johnson moved naturally from his discussion of Scotland and its history to his discussion of Ossian, as he perceived that Macpherson was making a media-historical argument about the nature of literary knowledge. Macpherson's supporter Hugh Blair echoed this ar-

gument in the preface to Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760), writing, "By the succession of these Bards, such poems were handed down from race to race; some in manuscript, but more by oral tradition."[110] As Jack Lynch has pointed out, it is easy from our own vantage point after the work of Alfred Lord and Milman Parry to disagree with Johnson's emphasis on the probative value of manuscripts, but Macpherson himself had set the terms of the debate when he referred to "Originals" and "manuscript copies" in his advertisement to the first edition of *Fingal* (1762).[111] As Johnson wrote, "If he had not talked unskilfully of *manuscripts*, he might have fought with oral tradition much longer."[112] But the Ossian controversy led Johnson to elaborate a theory of historical research, one that also winds through the *Lives*, in which manuscript offered a bridge between the ephemeral immediacy of personal, oral knowledge and the public mask of anonymous print.

Even as Johnson was writing the *Journey* and *Lives* and pursuing this theory of manuscript authenticity, he was aware that he had become the subject of ongoing biographical research. Boswell began planning to write the *Life of Johnson* as early as 1772, more than a decade before Johnson's death; he made no secret of preserving Johnson's conversation in his journal, and Johnson provided documents like his famous letter to Lord Chesterfield. But his pleasure in Boswell's attention sometimes rubbed up against prevailing notions of biographical decorum and epistolary propriety; as John Radner notes, the famously morbid Johnson must have been aware that, under the norms of eighteenth-century biography, in order for the *Life* to emerge he would have to die first.[113] While filling his book with Johnson's letters, Boswell records his subject's displeasure at *The Account of Corsica* (1768), which was based on Boswell's Grand Tour experiences and reproduced a letter from Johnson. Later, Johnson chided Boswell: "Who would write to men who publish the letters of their friends, without their leave?"[114] But this was, again, a question of revealing the letters of a living correspondent; Boswell also recorded Johnson's response, after "asking him explicitly whether it would be improper to publish his letters after his death": "Nay, Sir, when I am dead you may do as you will."[115] Although Johnson's biographers would follow his dicta regarding manuscript sources more thoroughly than he had managed himself, he knew that his own letters would provide valuable biographical material.

## "This Various Mass of Correspondence": The *Life* and Letters

Boswell's method in the *Life of Johnson* seems to synthesize the apparently contradictory statements Johnson made about biographical writing. Boswell

favored first-person accounts—lamenting that Johnson burned the autobiography he had compiled—and purported to focus on his subject's everyday habits and commonality with humankind. But while he had long broadcast his plan to write the *Life*, when Johnson died in 1784 Boswell apparently found himself in need of more material. Within weeks he began calling in Johnson's letters to friends and family as well as enlisting his correspondence networks to provide anecdotes and information, and he continued collecting over nearly seven years of composition, adding to the second and third editions letters that had arrived after publication of the first.[116] "Boswell's avowed intention was to publish all the letters he could get, except those already published by Mrs. Piozzi (from which he quoted very sparingly)"; he was almost completely successful in obtaining letters from Charles Burney, Bennet Langton, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Thomas Warton, partially successful with Lucy Porter, Edmund Hector, and Joseph Warton, and unsuccessful with a number of others including Lady Diana Beauclerk, Edmund Burke, and Frances Burney.[117] Johnson had destroyed large numbers of his papers in the final days of his life, but Boswell was able to retrieve his own letters, leaving him with an archive unavailable to most (except Piozzi, who also retained 115 of her letters to Johnson).[118] Boswell "engaged in a kind of manic pursuit of the facts which would set a standard for the scrupulous biographers of later ages," and he followed epistolary methods similar to those of the eighteenth-century antiquarians.[119] At the outset of his investigation, he sent letters to acquaintances repeating almost verbatim a request to, as he wrote to William Adams, "favour me with communications concerning him. . . . The more minute your narrative is the better. And if you will send me any letters from him of which you are possessed, your kindness shall be thankfully acknowledged."[120] This research project would necessarily cause delay, he noted as early as 1785: "The *Life* will be a large work enriched with letters and other original pieces of Dr. Johnson's composition; and, as I wish to have the most ample collection I can make, it will be some time before it is ready for publication."[121] In her journal Frances Burney recorded Boswell arguing that the letters would illustrate the private Johnson: "We have seen him long enough [as] . . . Grave Sam, and Great Sam, and solemn Sam, and learned Sam. . . . I want to show him as gay Sam, agreeable Sam, pleasant Sam; so you must help me with some of his beautiful billets to yourself."[122] Letters were the most obvious and available means for bridging the public and private aspects of Dr. Johnson the author and authority, and Sam Johnson the friend and mentor.

Presenting himself as both the confidant who was favored with Johnson's

conversation and the editor chosen to compile and arrange the textual evidence—although both claims were arguably shaky—Boswell highlighted his work as a researcher, bragging that he had "spared no pains" to verify details with "scrupulous authenticity."[123] He was already prolific in the kinds of intermediate life-writing forms that created the generic context for the documentary impulses that overtook biography in the second half of the eighteenth century, with particular connections to both antiquarian research and travel writing. His first book-length work was a collection of his own revised correspondence, *Letters Between the Honourable Andrew Erskine and James Boswell, Esq.* (1763), and he earned literary fame with his *Account of Corsica*. In the *Life,* he included one of his own letters to Johnson from Corsica, which offered little information about Johnson but sustained the image of "Corsica Boswell": "While I live, Corsica, and the cause of the brave islanders, shall ever employ much of my attention, shall ever interest me in the sincerest manner."[124] Again relying on travel-writing documents, he used his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (1785)—a travelogue that Johnson understood as biographical and essentially forbade Boswell to publish while the former was still alive[125]—as a prelude to the *Life of Johnson*, and he also kept copious journals and memoranda throughout his life, a practice in which Johnson encouraged him. He treated these journals as semi-public narratives, circulating them through the mail or reading them aloud to friends for feedback. In such ways, he engaged with the conventions of epistolary collections and travelogues while negotiating eighteenth-century norms regarding the publication of (auto)biographical texts.

Composing the *Life*, as Boswell presented it, was a process of collecting and refining such manuscript raw materials. He opened with a standard modesty statement, noting, "To write the Life of him who excelled all mankind in writing the lives of others . . . is an arduous, and may be reckoned in me a presumptuous task."[126] But he immediately moved from this self-effacing position to one in which he established his authority, adding, "As I have spared no pains in obtaining materials concerning him, from every quarter where I could discover that they were to be found, and have been favoured with the most liberal communications by his friends; I flatter myself that few biographers have entered upon such a work as this, with more advantages."[127] The *Life* included 76 uncut letters from Johnson to Boswell, and excerpts or quotations from most of the remaining 24, as well as 40 full letters from Boswell to Johnson, and parts of another 18;[128] emphasizing letters as documentary evidence helped Boswell to ward off accusations of vanity or impropriety for

printing his own correspondence. In total, the work featured nearly 350 letters to and from Johnson. Following the conventions of eighteenth-century letter writing, Boswell deflected authority to his subject and depicted himself as a kind of amanuensis.

Again turning his attention to the media of historical transmission, Boswell expressed the same doubts about the accuracy of oral tradition that Johnson had in discussing both biography and Ossian. While describing "the peculiar value of the following work" as "the quantity that it contains of Johnson's conversation," he constantly bemoaned "the defect[s] of my minutes," and less than half the text in fact consists of in-person interaction.[129] Echoing Johnson's contention that "lives can only be written from personal knowledge, which is growing every day less, and in a short time is lost for ever," he contemplated the material problems of compiling an account based on such embodied information.[130] He wrote of his process: "I found, from experience, that to collect my friend's conversation so as to exhibit it with any degree of its original flavor, it was necessary to write it down without delay. To record his sayings, after some distance of time, was like preserving or pickling long-kept and faded fruits, or other vegetables, which, when in that state, have little or nothing of their taste when fresh."[131] His recourse was to the letters, which, he noted late in the book, "altogether form a grand group in my biographical picture."[132] The "various mass of correspondence" which he as editor-author had "brought together" not only provided the data Boswell needed, but also allowed him to combine the new, competing requirements of eighteenth-century biography: a focus on personal daily activity and a record of documentary authentication.[133] He was at pains to show that Johnson had expected such an epistolary biography, noting the explicit permission he was granted while reflecting on the genre of the letter collection: "We talked of Letter-writing. Johnson. 'It is now become so much the fashion to publish letters, that in order to avoid it, I put as little into mine as I can.' Boswell. 'Do what you will, Sir, you cannot avoid it. Should you even write as ill as you can, your letters would be published as curiosities.'"[134] Indeed, he argued that Johnson's letters should be understood alongside his authorial output, noting that "his writings in every way, whether for the publick or privately to his friends, was by fits and starts," and including as an example a story of Johnson dashing off an *Idler* essay "as hastily as an ordinary letter."[135] Boswell treated Johnson's letters as informative and synecdochal; the conversations, meanwhile, were largely aesthetic and aphoristic.

Boswell thus offered a new, comprehensive version of the eighteenth-century letter collection, drawing upon the existing associations of lives and letters. The letter provided a bridge from the manuscript documents that separately preserved Johnson's thoughts and sentiments to the unified printed *Life*. As he wrote, incorporating Johnson's "own minutes, letters or conversation . . . will make my readers better acquainted with him, than even most of those who actually knew him, but could know him only partially; whereas there is here an accumulation of intelligence from various points, by which his character is more fully understood and illustrated."[136] The *Life*, he noted, was constructed from "innumerable detached particulars," again turning the biography into an epistolary collection; letters were made up of diverse pieces of news, and were themselves "detached particulars" that could only fully make sense when placed in context and sequence.[137] The structure of the work constantly broke away from linear narrative to epistolary interjections, a method that created a to-the-moment effect to which previous "lives" had barely aspired. Letters could be precisely dated and sequenced, depicting action as it unfolded and from the perspectives of its participants. For example, when describing Johnson's acceptance of a pension following the publication of his *Dictionary*, Boswell wrote, "I shall not detain my readers longer by any words of my own, on a subject on which I am happily enabled, by the favour of the Earl of Bute, to present them with what Johnson himself wrote."[138] Or again, after narrating his visit with Johnson to Greenwich and their discussion of Boswell's career: "The defect of my minutes will be fully supplied by a long letter upon the subject which he favoured me with, after I had been some time at Utrecht."[139] He wrote that Johnson's 1766 letter to William Drummond had "as strong marks of his sentiment and style, as any of his compositions," adding, "The original is in my possession."[140] The letter-based formatting of epistolary narration was a visual insistence upon authentic manuscript "originals."

A focus on Johnson's letters also allowed Boswell to create an appearance of intimacy that bolstered his claims to the position of biographer. Donald Greene has shown that Boswell and Johnson spent at most 250 days together during the final 22 years of Johnson's life, although these meetings occupy nearly half of the *Life*, and he argues that the work should be considered not biography but part of the genre of "*Ana* or *Table-Talk*."[141] John Radner adds that Boswell used letters not only to provide access to Johnson's private life, but also to sustain an image of their relationship; connecting the months- or years-long gaps between in-person conversations with letters between the two implied a closer and more continuous interaction than was the case in

reality.[142] While Boswell wrote to Anna Seward, "Dr. Johnson knew that I was his Biographer, and gave me a thousand particulars which will be interwoven into my narrative,"[143] he and others perceived two main competitors for the office: Sir John Hawkins and Hester Thrale Piozzi. Hawkins was one of Johnson's three executors and inherited his remaining papers; in a standard move, he was commissioned by the booksellers to write a "life" to accompany a collected edition of Johnson's works, which appeared in 1787.[144] Hawkins had access to important manuscript materials for Johnson's "literary remains," including part of a diary, but Johnson's circle disliked his *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*; Boswell criticized both Hawkins' "inaccuracy in the statement of facts" and "dark uncharitable cast, by which the most unfavourable construction is put upon almost every circumstance."[145] Piozzi, meanwhile, was a particular source of worry to Boswell, as she was known to have spent more time with Johnson since they met in 1765 than almost any other friend. However, she was generally stymied in her efforts to collect more of his letters and had only her own journals to rely on when compiling her *Anecdotes*. Her falling out with Johnson after her marriage to Gabriel Piozzi was public knowledge, and Boswell argued that she continually misrepresented his true character; he specifically questioned her sources, writing that she had edited her own letters and published a misleading selection of Johnson's, and that she had not recorded Johnson's conversational sayings soon enough after the fact, creating "disagreeable doubts of their authenticity." Boswell concluded, "However smart and entertaining Mrs. Thrale's *Anecdotes* are, they must not be held as good evidence against him."[146] He dismissed both Hawkins and Piozzi for not having engaged in the kind of rigorous research that delayed his publication and swelled it to its infamous length but that also gave it scholarly heft.

From our historical and literary vantage point it is easy to conclude that Boswell won the battle with Hawkins and Piozzi; one benefit of his long delay in publishing was the ability to respond to and supplant their accounts. But he was threatened especially by Piozzi's work, which he spent many pages of the *Life* contradicting. Piozzi's *Anecdotes* were initially successful, with the first edition selling out within a day and two additional editions appearing within a year.[147] There was certainly a gendered component to this rivalry, stemming from Johnson's fraught dependence upon the Thrales and dismissal of Piozzi following her second marriage.[148] However, Boswell rarely framed his opposition—in print, at least—in explicitly gendered terms; rather, he focused on the differences in genre between the two accounts. In order to oppose Piozzi, he had to undercut her method of collecting personal anecdotes, which pulled

Johnson into a feminine realm of gossip;[149] as Helen Deutsch argues, Piozzi's descriptions of Johnson's emotional state positioned him "at the limit of private feminine sympathy" rather than as the model of "public masculine feeling" that Boswell favored.[150] By grounding his own stories in epistolary research networks, Boswell worked to deflate this threat. Anecdotes fulfilled the criterion of "personal knowledge" that Johnson had asserted as key to biographical writing, but for Boswell they failed the test of evidentiary verifiability. Rather than bridging the public and private sides of a writer—showing him engaging in a world of correspondence that covered many aspects of his personality—they focused too exclusively on the private. Piozzi herself described the "Mosaic work" of the *Anecdotes* in these terms, writing, "What he said is all I can relate; and from what he said, those who think it worth while to read these Anecdotes, must be contented to gather his character."[151] She also disdained the "trick . . . of sitting steadily down at the other end of the room to write at the moment what should be said in company," implicitly ridiculing Boswell and rejecting Johnson's dictum that in order for biographical anecdotes to be reliable they must be recorded immediately.[152] However, because she emphasized speech rather than writing for her evidence and structure, her work had a disconnected, non-chronological style: "Like an extended conversation her narrative expands and contracts, digresses and repeats itself as it circles round her major figure."[153] This stylistic looseness offered an additional avenue for detractors to dismiss her biography.

The truth is that Boswell also relied on anecdotes, a word he used frequently when requesting communications from his epistolary circle; throughout the *Life* he defended his focus on "minute particulars," which he asserted were "characteristick, and always amusing."[154] Both Boswell's *Journal* and Piozzi's *Anecdotes* were initially criticized for revealing too much of Johnson, particularly of his more undignified moments.[155] In the early eighteenth century, "anecdote" was a synonym for "secret history," carrying a suggestion of scandal and partisan politics, but by the end of the century it had taken on a new definition in Johnson's *Dictionary*: "a biographical incident: a minute passage of private life."[156] By emphasizing the fact that his anecdotes were collected by and out of letters rather than personally recollected, Boswell created a distinction of medium that worked to sustain the larger methodological difference he was charting. Deutsch writes that the anecdote is "the form that summons up the here and now of the embodied speaking voice, the form that, as epitomized by Boswell's *Life*, commands communion and response."[157] This was in fact the late-century understanding of the genre of the letter, a metonym for the

embodied voice of the writer. While Boswell may have highlighted the compilation of conversational anecdotes in the *Life*, the rivalry with Piozzi caused him to depict letters, and epistolary research methods, as more reliable than oral tradition or even firsthand knowledge. By treating the book as an archive for a collected "mass of correspondence"—and excluding Piozzi's letters from that mass—he united many voices in one image of Johnson. Boswell's informants apparently understood themselves as participating in this kind of coterie; as William Maxwell wrote of the information he had provided, "The Anecdotes I flatter Myself you will think worth recording. They are most Unquestionably Genuine, and you may Use my Name as you think proper."[158] Boswell rejected a prominent strand of early modern and eighteenth-century life writing, the impressionistic memoirs or collected sayings, and emphasized instead the evidentiary bedrock on which any biographical account should stand.

The letters between Johnson, Boswell, and other correspondents are the clearest epistolary elements of the *Life*; Boswell often placed them as standalone insertions at the end of a year's chronology, separating them for visual prominence. But as he pursued research following Johnson's death, he also depended upon epistolary networks, a fact that emerges obliquely throughout the work. Boswell's surviving correspondence with those from whom he requested letters and other information reads remarkably like that of the antiquarians investigating people and places. He understood his task as one of "collecting materials"—original letters and manuscript accounts of Johnson's life—and he likened his work to a "Mausoleum" into which he hoped to place "all of his precious remains that I can gather"; as he wrote to Anna Seward with antiquarian comprehensiveness, "I am desirous to have every thing that can be had."[159] As time went on, he began referring to the work as an increasingly collaborative venture, promising his correspondents that they would receive credit in its pages and even cajoling those who asked that their names not be printed. He wrote to William Bowles, "In the Great Literary Monument which I am ambitious to erect to the memory of our illustrious departed Friend, I wish that those who are able to bear an honourable part, should each have a pillar inscribed with his own name."[160] These citations pop up throughout the text: "A traditional story . . . was communicated to me in a letter from Miss Mary Adye, of Lichfield"; "By Mr. Langton's kindness, I am enabled to enrich my work with a perfect transcript"; "Mr. Burney has kindly favoured me with the following memorandum."[161] He also collaboratively exchanged information in the manner of antiquarians; Irish antiquary Joseph Cooper Walker, who offered to make copies of any of Johnson's letters in Dublin, asked

for assistance on Scottish music for his "Historical Memoirs of our Bards and Music," while Bowles requested "particulars" for "Memoirs of the late Dutchess of Queensberry."[162] By collecting letters, Boswell entered into preexisting circuits of antiquarian research.

There was one person upon whom Boswell relied more than any other and who strengthens the work's links to traditions of antiquarian life writing: Edmond Malone, the Irish antiquarian and editor of Shakespeare, provided the goad that apparently enabled Boswell to finish writing the *Life* after procrastinating for years. Malone and Boswell became close friends in 1785 after knowing each other casually since 1781, and Malone first helped him finish the *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, "provid[ing] a stylistic standard and a model audience."[163] Malone, like Boswell, was trained as a lawyer, but unlike his friend he had a large enough allowance to abandon his profession and devote himself to his antiquarian studies; these included arranging John Aubrey's papers with a view to their publication, although, like Aubrey, he never achieved this goal. For the *Life*, Malone offered structural and stylistic advice, constantly urged Boswell to continue writing, and revised half of the proofs.[164] While it is difficult to know precisely what changes Malone suggested, Boswell wrote in 1789 that "the revision of my *Life of Johnson* by so acute and knowing a critic as Mr. Malone is of most essential consequence especially as he is *Johnsonianissimus*," adding in the advertisement to the first edition, "I cannot sufficiently acknowledge my obligations to my friend Mr. Malone."[165] The third edition of the *Life*, revised by Malone after Boswell's death in 1795, is now the standard scholarly edition, and it is possible that without Malone Boswell's collected minutes would, like Aubrey's, have remained in manuscript. In dedicating the *Journal* to Malone, Boswell wrote, "In every narrative, whether historical or biographical, authenticity is of the utmost consequence."[166] He demonstrated the links between the antiquarian and travel-writing traditions as he used his manuscript journals and letters to give the work form and content while also drawing from existing correspondence research networks. Placing Johnson within a broad epistolary circle was a crucial means to situate him as a hub of the written "world," demonstrating how his connections spanned literary society. Uniting these strands of eighteenth-century life writing with a new understanding of letters as offering intimate insight provided a method in the *Life* for bringing together archival research with personalized narrative, a structure that would overwrite the existing biographies of Johnson. By focusing on letters as sources for both factual authentication and private feeling, Boswell presented the life of an author as one constructed out of

his own textual output. The "man of letters" was precisely that, and Boswell's *Life* used letters to establish Johnson as the period's quintessential literary figure.

## Conclusion

The reactions to Boswell's *Life of Johnson* show that it is not only from our vantage point that we see the work as an innovation; contemporaries also understood his biographical method as one that bridged varieties of eighteenth-century life writing. Epistolary narration allowed the *Life* simultaneously to be an antiquarian collection of posthumous "literary remains," a travelogue recording both Johnson's and Boswell's voyages, and a to-the-moment unfolding of Johnson's daily activities. Some of the correspondents to whom Boswell applied for letters initially misunderstood his purpose in collecting them, assuming not that he would structure his narrative around epistles but that he would attach his "life" to a collection of works and letters. Thomas Warton, for example, wrote to Boswell in 1785, "I am informed that you mean to print a Collection of Dr. Johnson's Letters by way of Appendix to his *Life*."[167] Other correspondents reflected a more circumscribed understanding of the propriety of printing personal letters; the sister of Elizabeth Aston refused to give up hers, because she thought "a Correspondence of a private Nature ought not to be published," while William Bowles wrote, "The letters to me are in my judgement precisely those which should not be printed, I mean letters of friendship merely, which are valuable only to particular persons, at particular times."[168] And many reviewers agreed that Boswell's "minute particulars" often revealed too much of Johnson's vices and prejudices.

Boswell attempted to assuage such concerns by arguing that he as editor knew how to make "a distinction and separation" so that the letters could serve to "illustrate the Life of our great friend," not highlight his correspondents' personal lives.[169] Instead of simply printing correspondence, he interwove the communications "chronologically giving year by year his publications if there were any, his letters, his conversations, and every thing else that I can collect."[170] In the process of detailing this method, he refined a theory of biographical writing:

> Mason's *Life of Gray* is excellent, because it is interspersed with Letters which shew us the *Man*. His *Life of Whitehead* is not a Life at all; for there is neither a letter nor a saying from first to last. I am absolutely certain that *my* mode of Biography which gives not only a *History* of Johnson's *visible* progress through

> the World, and of his Publications, but a *View* of his mind, in his Letters, and Conversations is the most perfect that can be conceived, and will be *more* of a *Life* than any Work that has ever yet appeared.[171]

Piozzi, meanwhile, had followed a more traditional approach by printing her anecdotes and letters separately. As the eighteenth century drew to a close, it was Boswell's hybrid form, bringing together the existing genres of life writing with a new focus on documentary evidence, that would have the longer-lasting influence. Felicity Nussbaum argues that "the extraordinary power of the text to convey the character of Johnson *derived* from its hybrid nature, its intertwining of Boswell's autobiographical memoranda, rough notes, and journals, as well as Johnson's letters, diaries, and conversation, according to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century readers."[172] By 1831, John Wilson Croker could preface his new edition of the *Life* with the assertion that its success was due to the fact that "the work combines within itself the four most entertaining classes of writing—biography, memoirs, familiar letters, and . . . literary anecdotes."[173] The analysis of letters had become a central element of biographical research, as it remains today.

My focus on Boswell's epistolary investigative method thus circumvents the continuing debates about fact versus art in the *Life*—about, that is, whether to treat it more as history or literature. The bridging function of letters across media shows this to be a false distinction; I am interested not in the accuracy of Boswell's claims, but in how he built his argument for the increasingly valued concepts of authenticity and biographical truth. Beginning in the eighteenth century, there emerged a "cult" of collecting autographs and literary manuscripts, a trend that peaked in the nineteenth century as readers hoped to find communion with their favorite authors through the medium of handwriting.[174] The biographical focus on letters as evidence dovetailed with these amateur efforts. But even as Boswell emphasized the collection of letters, I believe that he followed Johnson in seeing them as inherently mediated documents that needed constant reinforcement: hence the requirement for an editor who could make a "distinction and separation." Letters for Boswell offered a means to assert factuality and immediacy while implicitly acknowledging that not everything about a life could or should be known. At the same time, the influence of his approach paved the way for the nineteenth-century "life and letters" version of biography, in which correspondence was increasingly privileged as self-evident fact. While the letter's role in the eighteenth-century epistolary collection, travelogue, or biography was to connect the subject to

"the world"—using the intersection between an author's personal and published writings as an insight into his or her character—the emphasis of writers like Johnson and Boswell on "manuscript originals" helped to depict the letter as quintessentially private, individual, and handwritten. Questions about the complex nature of letter writing diminished as letters became historical sources rather than textual performances. At the turn of the century, letters began to lose their bridging function, no longer actively drawing together media systems but rather serving a nostalgic or reified purpose. Even as Boswell made them standard in the biography, they were dropping out of the novel genre—a shift whose consequences will form the subject of my final chapter.

# Leaving "the World"

## The Decline of the Epistolary Novel from Burney to Austen

Literary history has adopted a conventional narrative about the rise and fall of the epistolary novel in the eighteenth century: following the genre-defining success of *Pamela* and *Clarissa* in the 1740s, the form went into relative hibernation for a generation before blossoming into ubiquity. While the novel-in-letters made up on average no more than 10 percent of all new fiction in the 1750s, its proportion of the market increased to between a quarter and a third of new titles in the 1760s, and averaged 40 percent of novels in the 1770s and 1780s. In later years, epistolary novels often made up more than half or even more than two-thirds of new fiction published each year.[1] But from this dominant cultural position, the epistolary novel underwent a precipitous decline in the late eighteenth century. The "turning point" came in 1791, when 15 out of 74 new novels, or 20 percent, were epistolary; by 1797–99, the average had reverted to 10 percent a year.[2] By the early nineteenth century, the epistolary novel was overwrought, unfashionable, and ripe for parody: "The world represented by such a feminized letter evidently seemed outmoded in the major literature of the Romantic period."[3] Epistolary novels, this story contends, had all but disappeared by 1815.

The most prominent and persuasive accounts of this disappearance have connected the letter, and the epistolary novel, to the French Revolution, arguing that the backlash against revolutionary politics swept up the disruptive, uncontainable genre of the letter. Mary Favret writes that the years following the Revolution saw a flourishing of printed epistolary works, which politicized the letter and made it unfit for the representation of feminine consciousness.[4] Likewise, Nicola Watson sees a "politicization of sentimental discourse" in which the letter came to signify women's sexual transgression and, further, treason and subversion in general.[5] While elucidating connections between politics and correspondence in the Romantic period, these arguments operate upon the association, which I explored and questioned in chapter 3, between women, letters, and the novel, participating in the critical tradition that sees the eighteenth-century letter as inherently fictional, feminine, and introspective. But political

letters, as I have shown, predated by a century epistolary novels focused on female characters, and they continued to be prominent genres of debate throughout the 1700s. The 1750s—the decade just before the boom in epistolary novels—saw, to take a sampling of titles, works such as *A Quaker's Letter to a Persecuting Priest*, *A Letter to the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Town of Boston*, and *A Letter from an Unhappy Young Lady, Now Under Confinement in Newgate, to a Certain Right Honourable Magistrate*. While the letter and, by association, the novel, had indeed come to be seen as a specially feminine preserve, in practice it remained the central genre of journalistic, diplomatic, business, political, and personal communication—making it an evidentiary foundation for the new forms of biography discussed in chapter 4. As critic and professor of belles lettres Hugh Blair wrote in 1783, "Epistolary Writing appears, at first view, to stretch into a very wide field. For there is no subject whatever, on which one may not convey his thoughts to the Public in the form of a Letter."[6] The printed letter had been "explicitly political"[7] almost since its inception.

We must look elsewhere to explain the apparent disappearance in the late eighteenth century of the epistolary novel. I situate this shift not in political but in media history to argue that it offered greater authorial control and served to distinguish the novel from the circulating mass of print and performative entertainments on offer in the late-eighteenth-century mediascape, an arena that novelists and critics continued consistently to denominate "the world." This reorientation shows that the expression of feminine interiority had not been the primary reason for the use of letters as novelistic devices in the period in which epistolary novels flourished. Instead, the bridging function of letters was foremost in writers' and readers' understanding of these works. Letters forged links across "the world," connecting novel writing to a tradition of epistolary newspapers, periodicals, travelogues, biographies, and political commentaries and thus establishing a framework for further innovation to take place—but also therefore making the novel potentially downmarket and ephemeral. The decline of the epistolary novel in the final quarter of the century shows authors stepping off the far side of the bridge, onto a newly defined and stable, but also stratified and hierarchical, terrain. The genre's downturn elucidates the central role that letters had played in the transition from manuscript to print as the established medium for literary, professional writing. Novelists abandoned the letter both because it was no longer needed to introduce readers to this landscape and because it connected them to a media history they now sought to shed. Letters could be uncontrollable, disruptive texts: they crossed the boundaries between nations, between domes-

tic and public spheres, between masculine and feminine conventions, and between media. They represented the problematic circulation of "the world," and their containment in third-person narration allowed authors to assert the primacy of novels over oral, embodied, and written entertainments. This was a literary and commercial strategy attuned to the changing conditions of the late-eighteenth-century novel, one that enabled a revitalization of novelistic conventions at a moment when the bubble of the epistolary novel suddenly burst.

This chapter will trace the decline of the printed letter, and a concomitant downplaying of worldly entertainment, in the novels and popular press of the late eighteenth century. In particular, I will follow a sequence of moves from the novels of Frances Burney to those of Jane Austen—a bridge that, I argue, serves as a metonym for changes in the novel genre as a whole. Austen establishes this sequence when she cites two novels by Burney and one by Maria Edgeworth as her standard bearers for the defense of the novel in *Northanger Abbey*. Her creation of this mini-canon confirms how Burney, Edgeworth, and Austen were all engaged in a strikingly similar authorial project: sublimating the epistolary aspects of their texts in order to valorize the novel genre. In the final quarter of the eighteenth century, new reading and writing practices—including the marketplace-altering institution of the circulating library and expansion of the critical reviews—along with a sudden uptick in the number of new novels printed each year, meant that the apparently established novel genre was once again seen as volatile and dangerous. William Warner has argued that the early eighteenth century witnessed an effort to "elevate" the novel by differentiating it from the "novels of amorous intrigue" associated with Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Haywood. Authors from Defoe to Fielding stressed the reformative potential of reading and de-emphasized novels' purely pleasurable or entertaining aspects.[8] In the process, they redefined the novel as a genre that should not delight without also instructing.

The debate around novel reading in the late eighteenth century shows that this process of elevation was far from complete.[9] The continuing attack of anti-novel criticism, combined with a seemingly overwhelming number of new novels each year, created a threat that all novels might be classed with other amusements as insubstantial, ephemeral, or immoral. A significant part of the problem was authors' reliance on epistolary narration, which in both genre and medium associated the novel with nonliterary texts such as newspapers, criminal biographies, secret histories, travelogues, *billet-doux*, and political pamphlets. As we saw in chapter 3, Richardson had early encountered this instability, as readers condemned Pamela or sided with Lovelace against Clarissa, but he

addressed it by producing more and more epistolary responses. In contrast, several of the late eighteenth century's most successful novelists switched gears, transitioning from the novel-in-letters to a third-person narration that allowed for a more confident, directive authorial voice—and that therefore opened a widening space between the novel and the "world" of entertainment media. Critics have long noted Austen's apparent abandonment of the epistolary—represented by the unpublished *Lady Susan* and the speculative first drafts of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*—and shift to her commanding third-person style of free indirect discourse. Like Austen, Burney and Edgeworth each also followed a career path of early reliance on epistolary novels followed by financial and critical success with works featuring omniscient third-person narrators. And these three authors were also key players in a larger cultural rewriting during which the novel positioned itself in the coalescing category of "Literature."[10] Rather than relying on the genre of the letter and the logic of epistolary communication, which aligned the text with porous real-world communications systems, the novel would define itself as engaged in larger-scale fictional world building. These three authors' different experiments built a bridge from the anarchic scene of the eighteenth-century entertainment "world" to the cultural dominance of the Victorian novel.

In order to understand this argument it will be necessary to return to *Northanger Abbey*'s defense of female novelists, which occurs through a valorization of three particular books: Burney's *Cecilia* (1782) and *Camilla* (1796), and Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801).[11] In the midst of a description of her characters' social activities in Bath, Austen notes that the protagonist, Catherine Morland, and her new friend Isabella Thorpe spend much of their time reading novels. Although Austen's descriptions of Catherine's taste in novels, which tends to the gothic variety, serve throughout the book as an implicit commentary on novel reading, at this point the author turns literary critic. She writes: "I will not adopt that ungenerous and impolitic custom so common with novel writers, of degrading by their contemptuous censure the very performances, to the number of which they are themselves adding—joining with their greatest enemies in bestowing the harshest epithets on such works, and scarcely ever permitting them to be read by their own heroine."[12] In contrast to more socially acceptable works such as a history of England, the poetry of Milton and Pope, and the *Spectator*, novels have only "genius, wit, and taste to recommend them." The author imagines a young woman, one much like Catherine, being questioned on her reading material and replying: "Oh! It is only a novel. . . . It is only Cecilia, or Camilla, or Belinda," or, as Austen goes on to describe

these works in the narrator's voice, "only some work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language."[13]

Critics have disagreed about how to interpret the defense, particularly because, among Austen's writings, it "is remarkable for its direct address to the reader, its vehemence, and its praise of women novelists."[14] Jan Fergus refers to it as Austen's "famous ironic attack" against masculinist ideas of literary virtue; elsewhere, she argues that "no contemporary critic can fully accept [Austen's] assessment" of the value of the three novels in question.[15] Rather than attempting to answer the insoluble problem of whether the defense is ironic or serious, however, I believe the more pertinent question is how Austen enables these three particular novels to stand here for the genre as a whole. She creates an implicit trajectory between her work and those of the earlier authors: she assimilates Burney and Edgeworth and values novels specifically as a source of pleasure, writing, "*Our* productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world."[16] Although this description of the pleasures of novel reading may now seem banal, for Austen it was a strike against critical truisms, what she describes as the reviewers' penchant "to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans."[17] As a genre associated with women and focused on the reader's entertainment and pleasure, the novel was vulnerable because it played to mass circulation and thus represented the changing educational and literacy patterns of the second half of the eighteenth century. Faced with the threat that the craze for epistolary novels might class all novels as insubstantial, ephemeral, and amusing, Austen uses her select trio to offer a new paradigm.

Indeed, much of the period's anti-novel commentary described the apparent problem of wide-scale production and consumption, with critics making exceptions for some novels—primarily those of Richardson and Fielding—while arguing that most readers could not tell the difference between high and low. As one magazine writer argued in 1793, "The constant readers of novels, very soon lose all relish for any other books . . . Books of mere amusement, are constantly found to induce a trifling, giddy, and thoughtless conduct, and to deprive their readers of a taste for useful study."[18] It was only in the 1810s that critics began to highlight pleasure and realism as primary criteria for evaluating novels, and many continued to disparage the genre;[19] pre-

vious generations had tended to argue that good novels should provide not pleasure but instruction in the form of precepts and examples. It was precisely the unstable nature of novelistic pleasure and entertainment that had left the genre morally suspect from its inception, and Austen's invocation of pleasure as the main benefit of novel reading represented a departure from the defensive strategies employed by earlier writers.[20]

But at the same time as Austen claims Burney and Edgeworth as colleagues, highlighting these three novels while ignoring the epistolary *Evelina, Leonora*, and *Letters for Literary Ladies*, she censures one of their standard authorial practices—the tendency to disown the genre label "novel" when describing their writing. All three of the works she cites have this propensity, using prefaces and other paratextual references to reject the "novel" brand and proposing instead genre markers such as "history," "moral tale," or "memoir." As Edgeworth writes in the preface to *Belinda*, "The following work is offered to the public as a Moral Tale—the author not wishing to acknowledge a Novel."[21] Austen is pointing to a state of "saturation," a moment in the history of mediation "when the sense of difference generated by initial proliferation becomes more of the same."[22] She identifies a market crowded with women novelists producing works very similar in content, form, and defensive strategy, and she distances herself on all three fronts. This is the central irony of that much-debated phrase, "Let us not desert one another; we are an injured body," Austen's apparent call to unity among female novelists in their opposition to male critics.[23] She seems to recognize that generations of novelists have faced the same criticism, stale and predictable by the early 1800s, but she simultaneously disparages one of the most common defensive maneuvers. She occupies the terrain of pleasure—the field that had been so contested with regard to women's reading—and overrides those who would define the novel in other ways.

Burney and Edgeworth did not offer a direct defense of the novel based on the now-familiar criteria of pleasure and fidelity to human nature, but they knew, despite protestations to the contrary, that they were in fact writing novels. In an implicit kind of "defense," they put the novel genre into context with other entertainment media of "the world" so as to expose the risks of media consumption and demonstrate the relative value of reading. Their high-society novels take as their subject the London social scene of plays, balls, operas, pleasure gardens, and other examples of what the eighteenth century called "public places." Through description and evaluation of these activities,

the authors offer plots and characters that, like the physical objects of the books themselves, are caught in a constant swirl of media. The immense popularity of these novels derived at least in part from a piggybacking on and categorizing of other attractions, which they simultaneously critiqued. In citing the earlier authors in her defense, Austen demonstrated the ways in which she was able to establish a new valuation of the novel only by building on their work in differentiating novels from other forms of entertainment. She rewrote and overwrote their own revisions to the epistolary novel, a printed commodity that in the eighteenth century may have had more in common with "amusements" like masquerades and Italian operas than with literary genres like poetry and history. At the same time, she failed to acknowledge this work and the fact that it occupied a different space, that of the London social "world," than did her novels with their "pictures of domestic Life in Country Villages."[24] Burney and Edgeworth immersed their texts in "the world," a phrase they used repeatedly to denote the network of public pursuits in the city's media environment.

In these novels, "the world" was both literalized and symbolized in ways that extend the role it has played throughout this book. "The world" continued to be composed of its media: it was the London social sphere of public entertainments, private letters, and border-crossing gossip. As Edgeworth explains, "the world" for a character like the rich, dissipated Lady Delacour is "the world of fashion, and she knew of no other."[25] Lady Delacour tells her would-be protégée Belinda, "*The world* still has the gloss of novelty for you. But don't expect that can last above a season."[26] Meanwhile, the model wife and mother Lady Anne Percival notes of her country home, "The *world* at Oakly-park and in London are two different worlds."[27] London's world featured a breadth and depth of media, from periodicals and pamphlets to plays and concerts, unavailable in almost any other setting. Indeed, one of its defining features was the Penny Post, which, with its multiple daily deliveries, was a potent emblem of the speed and interconnection of the city's communications. Epistolary narration provided a mimetic way to represent this sphere, as the novel could be transmitted in the mode of communication—the letter—that symbolized the networked media of "the world," now at the height of what I have termed the "postal era." But the letter genre, because of the bridges it built to the varieties of epistolary print this book has documented, also presented a lack of authorial power. Epistolarity put the novel on a continuum with other letter-based documents, which were often accessible and popular, but also fleeting, factious, and controversial. Ultimately, I argue, these

authors contended with the unstable character of epistolary narration by turning letters into plot points, rather than using them as an exchange-oriented mediation between writer and reader. The decline of the epistolary novel was, finally, a rejection of "the world."

## Modes of Circulation: Libraries and Reviews

The epistolary novels that flourished and then died off in the second half of the eighteenth century, as well as the dozens of pedagogical treatises, letter-writing manuals, and periodical commentaries critiquing the novels' moral and educational tendencies, were highly self-conscious about their media status as printed products. These works asked constantly: What was the best medium through which to know "the world"? Was it through the sensory experience of "public places," with their variety of amusements? Was it through (epistolary) conversation, the discursive site of individual authenticity? Or was it through print, in the reading of histories or novels, which offered readers a wider sphere of knowledge without the dangers of personal, bodily experience? Authors debating these questions spanned the genres, from prose dialogues to letters to the editor. Discussions of the era's changing conditions of production and circulation may have been "the most typical kind of mid-century writing."[28]

In this way, didactic texts, literacy and epistolary manuals, and review periodicals pursued a nexus of concerns that connected the reading of novels and letters to knowledge of the world. All of these fields were problematic but redeemable, in need of refinement that would distinguish good from bad examples. Since almost all critics were willing to concede that there were at least a few "good" novels, their task was both to point out those few and to teach readers how to make their own judgments. Similarly, letter writing continued to be both praised and derided as a feminine skill; women's supposedly messy handwriting and poor spelling were a frequent butt of jokes. As popular, everyday texts, letters were not held to the same standards of criticism as more elevated genres, so that women's presumed superiority was yet more evidence of their lack of access to formal education. As Edward Moore wrote in the periodical the *World* in 1753—noting that "it is the fair part of the creation which excels in that [epistolary] province"—"Several worthy persons have laid down rules for the composition of letters; but I fear it is an art which only Nature can teach."[29] Women's "natural" connection to letter writing made the epistolary novel a doubly feminine form, and educational texts drew energy from the anti-novel debate, producing canons and syllabi to help female readers choose "improving" works. As the novelists would, es-

sayists sought to legitimize some strands of novel reading and letter writing while discarding others.

There were three primary market-based factors that commentators connected to the question of novels and, specifically, epistolary novels in the late eighteenth century: the spread of the circulating library, the development of the critical reviews and monthly magazines, and the increase in the overall amount of printed material available. Circulating libraries appeared in the first half of the eighteenth century but spread quickly in the second; by 1800, there were around 1,000 of them in Britain, and almost every provincial town and pleasure site featured one.[30] The institutions allowed readers to rent dozens of books a year for the cost of purchasing one. They were overwhelmingly linked in the cultural imagination to fiction, and several scholars' studies of surviving catalogues have shown that the holdings were in fact largely novels, especially in the smaller, provincial libraries; in 1797, the pamphlet *The Use of the Circulating Libraries Considered* recommended a starting catalogue for a new library of 1,500 volumes, of which 1,050 should be novels.[31] While, in general, the libraries' collections were made up of anywhere from 20 to 70 percent fiction, in the provincial libraries more than 50 percent of books, on average, were novels.[32] By 1800, most of a novel's print run would be sold to circulating libraries: "The libraries became particularly associated with reading novels because of the low marginal utility of rereading them; that is, in comparison with other books, most novels were (and still are) disposable pleasures to be read once and forgotten."[33] The libraries were not only distributors but also producers of fiction, printing a disproportionate number of the novels published anonymously or by "a lady."[34] Barbara Benedict argues that the libraries shifted reader taste toward works focused on plot and character development, adding that "circulating novels established their own literary context not through plaudits in critical reviews but through intertextuality," making reference to other novels.[35] Circulating libraries solidified genre conventions, normalizing fiction as the province of women writers and readers while also stigmatizing it on that basis.[36]

Over and over, periodical and pedagogical commentators on novels moved swiftly from a discussion of the genre as a whole to a condemnation of a specific type: "that common herd of Novels (the wretched offspring of the circulating libraries)" that were "despised for their insignificance, or proscribed for their immorality."[37] Circulating libraries embodied the literary market's problems of oversupply, overconsumption, and the resulting lack of discrimination in taste. Metaphors of taste and digestion, in fact, were ubiquitous ways to link

an interest in reading novels for pleasure with corporeal instinct. In 1797, a magazine excerpt from Thomas Gisborne's *Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* decried the addictive powers of fictional narratives: "The appetite becomes too keen to be denied; and in proportion as it is more urgent, grows less nice and select in its fare. . . . The produce of the book-club, and the contents of the circulating library, are devoured with indiscriminate and insatiable avidity. Hence the mind is secretly corrupted."[38] Novelist Clara Reeve echoed the same strain, writing of the "Chaos of a circulating Library," "Young people are allowed to subscribe to them, and to read indiscriminately all they contain; and thus both food and poison are conveyed to the young mind together."[39] What the circulating library brought to the fore was the need for mechanisms to distinguish—the need for an articulated, hierarchical literary system.

Circulating libraries, like their predecessors the coffeehouses, were "public places," more scenes of sociable interaction than silent reading: "fashionable daytime lounges where ladies could see others and be seen."[40] The growth of a mass audience for fiction through the circulating libraries, and the concurrent extension of the link between women and novels, was a core element of the media environment in which Burney, Edgeworth, and Austen began their careers; indeed, Burney first appeared in print by selling *Evelina* anonymously to the circulating library proprietor Thomas Lowndes.[41] Austen assumes readers' familiarity with library conventions when Mr. Collins is invited to read aloud in *Pride and Prejudice*: "A book was produced; but on beholding it (for everything announced it to be from a circulating library), he started back, and begging pardon, protested that he never read novels."[42] The mid- to late eighteenth century's new critical reviews, decrying the effects of the circulating libraries, reinforced such connections between epistolary novels, women, and inexpensive (and thereby low-quality) books in their criticism of individual works and more general commentary on the literary marketplace. The periodical articles implied connections between the overall market and epistolary writing either by commenting on epistolary novels or by using the epistolary form to convey their opinions about the novel genre.

The critical reviews took an active part in the business of selection and differentiation within the media world. As the size of the reading public and the number of printed works expanded over the course of the eighteenth century, readers, *Monthly Review* editor Ralph Griffiths wrote, needed a "recommendation" in order "to have some idea of a book before they lay out their money or time on it." This purpose could be answered only in the genre of a "periodical work, whose sole object should be to give a compendious account

of those productions of the press, as they come out."[43] The editors of the *Monthly* and *Critical* reviews operated on a "principle of selectiveness" in which hierarchies of taste were signaled by the placement of reviews within the magazines: the full review articles went to books deemed more significant or meritorious, while lower-quality works were located in the catalogue.[44] At the same time, the reviews expanded definitions of acceptable reading by covering a wide range of belles lettres, which had generally been excluded from earlier summary periodicals like the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Works of the Learned*.[45] By the 1790s, the reviews "were at the height of their influence and development," with five going in the period of 1793 to 1796, all of which lasted for at least 10 years.[46] As an author in the *New Annual Register* wrote in 1781, "Of late, almost every Magazine hath been converted into a sort of Review"[47]—a trend that would only accelerate with the introduction of the *Edinburgh* in 1802 and its Tory rival, the *Quarterly*, in 1809. In the first issue of the *Edinburgh Review*, the editors noted that "they wish[ed] their Journal to be distinguished, rather for the selection, than for the number, of its articles."[48] The "principle of selection," apparently ignored by the circulating libraries, was a primary consideration for reviewers.

The circulating libraries and critical reviews were different solutions to the problem of how to access, categorize, and interpret the mass of texts engendered by the overarching material factor in the literary marketplace: a rise in the amount of printed matter being produced, accompanied by a disproportionate increase in the number of novels in circulation. As scholars have shown, both literacy rates and the number of texts in print in England increased sharply in the last quarter of the century.[49] This quantitative growth arguably produced qualitative changes in reading practices, as reading became less the preserve of the upper classes and "readers seemed now to prefer to read one [book] after another."[50] Total imprints for books in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales fluctuated for the first five decades of the eighteenth century, before showing steady increases of, on average, 15 percent per decade between 1753 and 1783. Remarkably, the number of imprints exploded in the next decade, showing a 73 percent increase, from 3,924 to 6,801, between 1783 and 1793.[51] Even as fiction continued to make up a small share of the market,[52] the number of novels in print grew even faster than the overall domain of printed materials, and the "rate of increase in new women novelists was greater than the overall increase in women writers."[53] This was the novel-writing and -reading marketplace to which Burney, Edgeworth, and, later, Austen, would have to adapt themselves in order to rise to the top of the critical and commercial

heap. By engaging with reviewers at the same time as they appealed to the library-going public, they pursued careful and perceptive schemes for making their works stand out in the entertainment marketplace.

## Sending a Novel into "the World": Burney, Edgeworth, and the London Media Market

Both Burney and Edgeworth became major players in this media world, literary celebrities whose names could sell books and whose earnings supported their families.[54] Each author was highly aware of her status and embedded herself in the print marketplace, using paratextual materials and plot points to outline and redefine the conditions of possibility for a female author.[55] They responded directly to the major market trends outlined earlier: the popularity of epistolary narration, the new modes for disseminating and reviewing books, and the overall surge in print and novel production. Burney testified to her awareness of this surge in the preface to *Evelina*, where she wrote that "in the world at large . . . among the whole class of writers, perhaps not one can be named of whom the votaries are more numerous, but less respectable" than the novelist.[56] She dedicated the novel, published anonymously and without her family's knowledge, to "the Authors of the Monthly and Critical Reviews," claiming as her patrons "those who publicly profess themselves Inspectors of all literary performances . . . [the] Magistrates of the Press, and Censors for the Public."[57] But even as Burney noted the depreciated nature of the novel genre, she offered her own canon—Rousseau, Johnson, Marivaux, Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett—as evidence that "no man need blush at starting from the same post."[58] Similarly, Edgeworth used the advertisement for *Belinda* to both create her own select list and distance herself from general novels: "Were all novels like those of madame de Crousaz, Mrs Inchbald, miss Burney, or Dr Moore, she would adopt the name of novel with delight," but given the state of things she declined to "acknowledge" that her work was a novel, calling it a "moral tale" instead.[59] Even in her correspondence, Edgeworth clung to the "moral tale" label, writing to a friend in 1814, "I have within these few months published a novel or rather a moral tale called *Patronage*."[60] Like Austen, the authors offered their own canons of novelists, but unlike her they questioned the value of the genre category "novel."

In these ways, Burney and Edgeworth dealt directly with the continuing, vociferous debate over the status of novel reading and writing in the late eighteenth century. They initially benefited from the approachable, intermedial genre of the letter, publishing epistolary novels that were both commercially

successful and well reviewed, but they later rejected the technique as they sought to distinguish their works from other entertainment media with which the novel was in competition. For their books of the late 1780s to early 1800s—some of the bestselling and best reviewed novels of the period—the media environment of the London world offered a means to both structure their fictional worlds and model how young women in the real world should engage with fictional texts. The ability of the eponymous heroine to read "the world" and the men she encounters in it, and to make the correct judgments and display discriminating taste, is consistently analogized to her ability to choose the correct reading material.[61] These main characters must fully enter into but ultimately retreat from "the world," a process of immersion and withdrawal that provides a pattern for appropriate, selective female reading, which should be neither intemperate nor abstemious. At the same time as the novelists refined this basic plot structure, they transitioned away from the epistolary format, a move that offered them greater authorial control and that served to distinguish their novels from the world's circulating, transient print and performative entertainments. Even as their books took as their subject matter women's engagement with written, embodied, and performed media, the authors moved to third-person narration to offer a stable perspective rather than the competing voices of an epistolary network. By turning away from the bridge genre of the letter and thus downplaying the novel's connections to other forms of epistolary print, Burney and Edgeworth worked to separate the novel from "the world."

In one of the more distressing sections of Burney's first, epistolary novel, *Evelina*, the seventeen-year-old heroine gets lost in the "dark walks" at the Vauxhall pleasure garden, where she is mistaken for an actress/prostitute and nearly raped. Within the unstable social space of one of London's most famous sites for public entertainment, Evelina can in a matter of minutes go from mingling with the aristocracy to defending herself against a gang of men who refuse to believe she is not sexually available. According to the logic of the text, she both is and is not responsible for the turn of events; she unwittingly entered the dark walks without understanding them as a site for sexual liaisons, but her pursuit of entertainment brought her to Vauxhall in the first place. Indeed, she is undeterred by her experiences there and in the rest of the novel continues to visit theaters, opera houses, and pleasure gardens. Burney makes clear that the "world" Evelina enters is that of London entertainment; she engages with this realm immediately upon arrival in the capital, writing, "This moment arrived. Going to Drury-Lane theatre."[62] Evelina's process of educa-

tion requires that she circulate through a media landscape that, like that of the pleasure garden, offers risk and reward side by side. William Galperin argues that distinctions are ultimately impossible to make in the London world, a location of risky possibilities whose "leveling tendency" confounds people, ranks, and forms of pleasure. Patricia Meyer Spacks adds that the pursuit of media is often the genesis of the protagonists' dilemmas: "'The world' one should avoid constitutes a realm of social performance and falsity."[63] The dangers to which Evelina exposes herself are thus not initially sexual but medial. This is a pattern that plays out across Burney's and Edgeworth's oeuvres, in which the pursuit of media always requires the public entanglement of bodies—a perilous situation that in the course of their novels leads to a suicide at Vauxhall, a duel at the opera, an attack by a trained monkey at a party, and an embarrassing case of mistaken identity at a masquerade, to name just a few such scenes. The three third-person novels Austen cites as exemplary expose the uncontrollability of worldly, epistolary entertainment and tie it to the ever-present social risks for unmarried women.

Burney was well versed in the entertainment forms of such "public places"; she had hoped to follow up *Evelina* with her play *The Witlings*, but her father Charles Burney and father figure Samuel Crisp suppressed the latter work and encouraged her to continue as a novelist.[64] In acquiescing, she turned her attention to the conditions of the London world and to the ability of writing to forge connections. Burney insisted on making her novels increasingly unconventional, starting with the turn away from the faddish epistolary form. Rather than capitalizing on the popularity of *Evelina* with another epistolary novel, she "sen[t] Cecilia into the world" in the more ambitious five-volume, third-person structure she would use for the rest of her works.[65] Like Evelina, Cecilia is forced to leave her country home and the protection of a beloved mentor to seek herself in London society. At the age of 20, the heiress is "mistress" of a large fortune but, problematically, of "little knowledge of fashionable manners and of the characters of the times."[66] "Cecilia had seen little of life," the narrator later remarks,[67] and what Burney will show her of it are the intertwined media market of public amusements and meat market of landed gentlemen looking for rich wives. As soon as Cecilia arrives in London, it is impossible for her to escape from the rounds of operas, pleasure gardens, routs, and masquerades, even when she tries. As the narrator puts it, "The mornings were all spent in gossiping, shopping and dressing, and the evenings were regularly appropriated to public places, or large parties of company."[68] This routinized "novelty" continues ad infinitum and, for Cecilia, ad nauseam, as

she soon begins "to grow weary of eternally running the same round, and to sicken at the irksome repetition of unremitting yet uninteresting dissipation."[69] "The world" offers the heroine not the anticipated pleasure but danger, difficulty, embarrassment, and confusion.

Burney's narrative operates by moving Cecilia in and out of "public places"; like a young gentleman traveling to Europe, she enters London and in fact takes a grand tour of "the world." Separate chapters document "An Assembly," "An Opera Rehearsal," "A Masquerade," "A Family Party," and "A Rout," among other scenes. At the beginning of the novel, Burney pinpoints the orphan Cecilia's financial situation: she has £10,000 clear left to her by her parents, in addition to her late uncle's estate of £3,000 pounds a year, but according to the terms of her uncle's will her husband must take her last name of Beverley or she will lose the estate. Cecilia is en route to London, where she will live with a childhood friend and her husband, who has been appointed one of Cecilia's guardians. This couple, the fashionable and spendthrift Harrels, pressure Cecilia into borrowing money for their use; meanwhile, she meets and falls in love with Mortimer Delvile, the son of one of her other guardians. His parents, however, oppose the marriage because of the will's name clause. Cecilia and Mortimer marry in secret, but the marriage, and the fact that he had not changed his name, is discovered, and she is evicted from her estate. Eventually, she recovers some but not all of her fortune, and they reconcile with his parents, an ambiguously happy ending that Burney insisted separated her work from "hack Italian Operas" and made the novel "more according to real life, & less resembling every other Book of Fiction."[70] Burney designed *Cecilia* to eschew clichés.

In *Evelina*, Burney played with the conventions of the epistolary novel by making naming, particularly the heroine's ability to name herself, into a key question of the work. Evelina engages epistolary form as she uses the subscriptions to her letters repeatedly to draw attention to her own surname, which is initially feigned, later questioned, and finally changed to that of her new husband. Evelina signs her first letter, to her mentor Mr. Villars, "Your Evelina—," adding, "I cannot to *you* sign *Anville*, and what other name may I claim?" while her penultimate note, sent just before her marriage, closes, "Now then, therefore, for the first—and probably the last time I shall ever own the name, permit me to sign myself . . . Evelina Belmont."[71] It is ultimately a letter, combined with Evelina's strong resemblance to her dead mother, that establishes the truth of her parentage; as her father, Lord Belmont, says of the mother's posthumous missive, "Ten thousand daggers could not

have wounded me like this letter!"[72] In *Cecilia*, however, Burney undercuts the transparency of the letter—speaking for the mother in the hand of the daughter—by undermining the heroine's ability to correspond in both speech and writing. Beginning with her visit to an assembly at which she discerns two equally meaningless forms of conversation, "the insignificant click-clack of modish conversation . . . [and] the pensive dullness of affected silence,"[73] and ending with a bout of insanity that renders her delirious, Cecilia's stay in London constitutes a continual degradation of communication. Writing, rather than stabilizing or clarifying speech, creates further confusion.

Letters in *Cecilia* are constantly mis-signifying: they are maliciously misinterpreted, go astray, are intercepted, fail to convey true feeling, and are generally mysterious and problematic objects and texts. *Cecilia*'s epistolary network is in fact more extensive than that of *Evelina*, which is written in a quasi-diaristic style by the title character, whose letters make up more than two-thirds of the total (58 out of 84 letters).[74] In *Cecilia*, by contrast, letters are not windows into the soul but worldly objects in which writers manipulate the standards of epistolary interaction. Cecilia reacts with "vexation," "amazement," and "agony"[75] to the nearly three dozen letters that punctuate the text, as she is often powerless either to decode them or explain herself: "Cecilia read and re-read this letter, but with a perturbation of mind that made her little able to weight its contents. Paragraph by paragraph her sentiments varied, and her determination was changed. . . . In this fluctuating state of mind she found writing impracticable."[76] In addition to such emotional complications, she is frequently brought up short by the materiality of letter writing, which inhibits rather than enabling communication. For example, after repenting of her promise to privately marry Delvile, "she resolved to write to him instantly, and acquaint him of the alteration in her sentiments . . . many letters were begun, but not one of them was finished, when a sudden recollection obliged her to give over the attempt,—for she knew not whither to direct to him."[77] Rather than demonstrating a mundane reliability, letters in Cecilia tend to be written not to communicate news, but at moments of extreme emotion when speech has failed. As the narrator writes of Delvile, "He at length said that if she would consent to receive a letter from him, he would endeavor to commit what he had to communicate to paper, since their mutual agitation made him unable to explain himself with clearness." However, his letter does not solve the impasse: "The day past away, and Cecilia had yet written no answer; the evening came, and her resolution was still unfixed."[78] Over and over in the novel, characters find themselves unable to communicate—

due to indecision, incomprehension, incapacitating passion, or material inability—in both speech and writing.

*Cecilia*'s letters therefore need a narrative frame to guide the reader on how to interpret them, filling in the gaps that surround the epistles. The discursive instability of the epistolary novel, where narrative authority is dispersed among many characters, is here translated into a plot device: the heroine's need to remove herself from London in order to regulate her own reputation and self-image—that is, her own narrative. Margaret Doody writes, "*Cecilia* has no artless ingénue narrator, but a sober, strong, and ironic third-person narrator, daring to speak out with authority about the nature of the people of the world and of the world itself."[79] Rather than unfolding events from Cecilia's perspective, the narrator demonstrates her own expertise in London's media ecology; in the process, she connects a problematic epistolarity to the sexual and financial dangers the heroine encounters in "the world." In the novel's most violent yoking of public places and ineffective epistolarity, Cecilia's guardian Harrel commits suicide at Vauxhall Gardens after losing his fortune gambling. Just before his death, Harrel gives Cecilia a sealed packet, which turns out to contain "a roll of enormous bills, and a collection of letters from various creditors, threatening the utmost severity of the law if their demands were longer unanswered. Upon a slip of paper which held these together, was written, in Mr. Harrel's hand. *To be all paid tonight with a* BULLET." Shocked at the "incoherent letter" accompanying the packet, with its "specimens of guilt and infamy," Cecilia is unable to convey the contents to others, since "she could hardly read on to herself."[80] The suicide itself becomes the evening's spectacle, as "the scene of desperation and horror which many had witnessed, and of which all had heard the signal, engrossed the universal attention."[81] Situating the fateful packet in Cecilia's hands throughout the episode at Vauxhall, Burney ties together hazardous publicity and unstable epistolarity.

Burney thus uses Cecilia's introduction to London—her "Entrance into the World," as the subtitle to *Evelina* has it—more generally to dramatize the value of information and reputation, as Cecilia is repeatedly dismayed to find that what she thought were personal interactions and private contracts have been "published to the world."[82] The novel's interest in the overlapping circulation of people and information demonstrates the continuing importance of epistolarity even in what is no longer an epistolary novel. Letters containing "information," "news," and "intelligence" are continually cycling through the network of major and minor characters Burney establishes; the author employs these three terms nearly 150 times in the novel, or about once every six

pages. Julia Epstein notes the prominence of letters in Burney's novels, arguing that the letter offered a path to female authorship but carried a problematic generic history: "For eighteenth-century women, letters represented an especially tricky mode of writing, a form circumscribed and intellectually suspect by its classification as a feminine 'accomplishment.'"[83] Letter-writing, far from being a communion between hearts and minds, was yet another social amusement, and London's mixed, volatile social and written spaces created a media environment in which news and information moved through various channels, apparently beyond the control of any individual human agent. As Burney writes late in the novel, in a sentiment repeated in varied form throughout, "How reports thus false and thus disgraceful should be raised, and by what dark work of slander and malignity they had been spread, remained a doubt inexplicable."[84] Just as written information was more unfettered in the London Penny Post—which is mentioned several times in the novel as an untrustworthy channel liable to interception—so too did rumor and gossip spread uncontrollably through the networks of London's social spaces.

By focusing in this way on the circulation of information, Burney in *Cecilia* offers extensive if implicit commentary on the relationship of writing to "the world" and on the correct ways to engage with both realms. Narrativizing the dangers of media, she highlights instead the potentials of the novel form; as Emily Allen writes, "The novel becomes not just the debut effort of an increasingly canonical author, not just a harbinger of Jane Austen's fiction, but a participant in an underlying cultural struggle that would make the nineteenth-century realist novel possible: the privatizing shift from spectacular public entertainments to novel reading."[85] After finding early in the novel that Harrel has turned his home into a "spectacular site" by hosting masquerades and building a private stage,[86] Cecilia turns to her private library for "the exhaustless fund of entertainment which reading, that richest, highest, and noblest source of intellectual enjoyment, perpetually affords."[87] In adding to her library, however, Cecilia again overindulges, going into debt to purchase books. In the narrator's comment that "she was restrained by no expence from gratifying her taste and her inclination,"[88] we can hear an ironic note that accuses Cecilia of participating in the reading practices condemned by anti-novel critics: those that cater to the reader's whims without regard to morality or public benefit. When she must beg an advance on her allowance to cover her book purchases, she is rebuffed by both of her two other guardians, the miserly Briggs and arrogant Delvile, who tell her, respectively, that "words get no cash," and that "The Spectator, Tatler and Guardian, would make library sufficient for

any female in the kingdom, nor do I think it like a gentlewoman to have more."[89] As Catherine Gallagher writes, *Cecilia* "converts the paradox of reading novels"—that the reader could receive real improvement through engagement with an imaginary world—"into a corresponding moral problem." Reading makes Cecilia financially and socially indebted, aligning her with Burney's reader: "That single women, like readers, are just naturally in debt is one of the novel's most fundamental assumptions."[90] Cecilia's apparently private reading choices become part of the social information network as she is required to explain and expunge her debts.

Despite her ongoing attempts to put her fortune to charitable purposes—altruistic efforts that also lead her further into debt—it is not, in the end, possible for Cecilia to improve the world, and she must learn to be more circumspect in both her emotional and financial expenditures. She can, however, improve herself, and she does so by withdrawing from London and scaling back on her social commitments following her marriage. *Cecilia* closes with one of the least optimistic final lines of an eighteenth-century courtship tale: "Rationally . . . she surveyed the world at large, and finding that of the few who had any happiness, there were none without some misery, she checked the rising sigh of repining mortality, and, grateful with general felicity, bore partial evil with chearfullest resignation."[91] Burney insisted on the novel's equivocal ending, in which Cecilia marries honorably but loses her inheritance, arguing in a letter to her literary mentor Crisp, "If I am made to give up this point, my whole plan is rendered abortive, and the last page of any novel in Mr. Noble's circulating library may serve for the last page of mine, since a marriage, a reconciliation, and some sudden expedient for great riches, concludes them all alike."[92] Reworking the conventional happy ending of the epistolary novel—including of the epistolary novel, *Evelina*, on which her own authorial reputation was founded—led Burney also to recast the typical conclusion to the high-society heroine's engagement with "the world." The space of the country estate to which Cecilia withdraws with her husband, having lost both her own estate and her friends in London, gives her the vantage point from which dispassionately to view the "world at large" without living in "the world." Secluded and surrounded by the small group with which she still wishes to communicate, she removes herself from London's circuit of mysterious epistolarity.

*Cecilia* elucidates the interconnection of the three key authorial practices tying together the works named in Austen's "defense": the plot focus on the London world, the transition away from epistolary narration, and the attempt

to elevate a new kind of novel writing. Like Burney, Edgeworth recognized that the expanded market for novels and ubiquity of certain novelistic conventions made it difficult for any individual author or work to stand out. As she wrote in a letter to her sister, "Do not despise Belinda even if you should meet with her in a circulating library,"[93] a space in which all novels would be jumbled together. Edgeworth's career as a novelist did not follow as straightforward a path from letters to narration as did Burney's, since she wrote epistolary novels before and after *Belinda—Letters for Literary Ladies* in 1795 and *Leonora*, an expansion of the same story, in 1806—but her novels represent as clear an attempt to refine and redefine the genre by valuing it in relation to other social media. Edgeworth's rewriting of the epistolary novel, while also focusing on the London media environment, took its cues from the late-eighteenth-century debate about the "cult of sensibility," a trope that had been particularly associated with the interiorized, confessional style of epistolary novels.[94] The dangers of excessive sentimentality are made clear in *Letters for Literary Ladies*, in which the novel-reading Julia justifies her selfish behavior using the language of sensibility, but the epistolary structure of that hybrid work—in which two gentleman first exchange letters on the topic of women's education before the plot unfolds in an epistolary dialogue between women—engenders a variety of contradictory perspectives on the overlapping questions of women's reading, the novel genre, letter writing, and appropriate feeling. It was instead in Edgeworth's "moral tale" *Belinda* that she was able to articulate the value of certain types of reading through ongoing comparison with the "pleasures of the world."[95] Her initial concern with sentimental literature expanded into a thorough analysis and ranking of the world's entertainment media.

In *Belinda*'s opening advertisement, Edgeworth focuses on the need to cultivate selective tastes in order to enjoy the correct kind of reading material, writing of novels, "So much folly, errour, and vice are disseminated in books classed under this denomination, that it is hoped the wish to assume another title will be attributed to feelings that are laudable, not fastidious."[96] Likewise, the plot of *Belinda* highlights the processes of comparison that allow the heroine and hero to unite as appropriate marriage partners. In the novel, Belinda lives in Bath with her aunt, Mrs. Stanhope, whose philosophy is that "all [a young lady's] charms and accomplishments should be invariably subservient to one grand object—the establishing herself in the world."[97] Like Evelina and Cecilia, Belinda moves from the country to London, where she enters the circuit of balls, masquerades, and operas; in an early instance of mistaken identity, she finds that she is understood as a kind of commodity, "hawked about

everywhere" with her aunt "puffing" her: "Belinda Portman, and her accomplishments, I'll swear, were as well advertised as Packwood's razor strops."[98] With this mercenary reputation, Belinda is in competition for the affections of Clarence Hervey with both the worldly Lady Delacour, with whom she lives in London, and the sentimental country girl Virginia, whom Hervey has raised to be his wife according to Rousseau's plan of education in *Emile*, "secluded from all intercourse with the world."[99] Hervey also has a competitor, the West Indian planter Mr. Vincent, who turns out to be a gambler. By the novel's end, Belinda is able to reconcile Lord and Lady Delacour into conjugal happiness and, following a series of misunderstandings, to marry Clarence Hervey. Belinda's mediation between Lady Delacour and Virginia, as she engages with the world but does not lose herself to it, models correct media consumption for the novel's characters and readers.

Belinda is the quintessential protagonist, to be satirized by Austen, who refuses to read novels herself. From the opening page of the work, she is characterized based on her relationships to London amusements, on the one hand, and reading, on the other. Belinda, the narrator tells us, is not a "docile pupil" for her aunt because she "had been educated chiefly in the country; she had early been inspired with a taste for domestic pleasures; she was fond of reading, and disposed to conduct herself with prudence and integrity."[100] Belinda finds that her early education does little to prepare her for life in London, so that "her taste for literature declined in proportion to her intercourse with the fashionable world, as she did not in this society, perceive the least use in the knowledge that she had acquired."[101] When she returns to the countryside, she again takes up reading as she studies Milton, Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, and other such "improving" works. However, Edgeworth does not make direct pronouncements against novels, but instead offers qualified cautions. As Kathryn Kirkpatrick writes, "Although fiction seems to attract the most criticism in *Belinda*, Edgeworth does not always sanction reading by genre. Rather, any work that appeals more to feeling than reason is condemned."[102] It is better, Edgeworth seems to say, to understand the qualifications of the media spheres described in the novel—the "fashionable world," the "world of wickedness," or the "two different worlds" of London and a provincial estate, for example[103]—than to condemn entire realms of literature. Belinda comments, "If I had never seen the utmost extent of the pleasures of the world, as they are called, my imagination might have misled me to the end of my life; but now I can judge from my own experience."[104] She displays the acquisition of good media-consumption habits: the young female reader should not avoid

"the world" entirely, but should use her experiences to learn how to choose between good and bad entertainments and freely move into and out of the fictional worlds of her books.[105]

Edgeworth develops Belinda's superior judgment by revealing the character's escalating distaste for the London world; as Belinda notes, "It is singular, that my having spent a winter with one of the most dissipated women in England should have sobered my mind so completely."[106] The narrator demonstrates how a preference for domesticity maps onto a preference for books over ephemeral amusements, but she also shows that any reading is not necessarily superior: characters must acquire the media sense to discriminate between kinds of literature. Both Lady Delacour and Virginia are led astray by the wrong type of reading; Lady Delacour, believing she is dying, turns to Methodist tracts, while Virginia, even though she is barred from reading "*common* novels," "devours" romances that leave her, as she says, with "only confused ideas, floating in my imagination."[107] In resisting a public image as a fortune-hunting coquette, Belinda also resists her inscription into the plot of a "common" novel, an awareness that emerges through Edgeworth's many metatextual comments on the genre in which the characters find themselves. Lady Delacour notes early on that "nothing is more unlike a novel than real life," but in the final pages unfolds the *eclaircissement* by asking the assembled characters, "Shall I finish the novel for you?"[108] Alluding to the work of her contemporary Burney, Edgeworth even pokes fun, like Austen, at the clichés of anti-novel discourse; when Lady Delacour encourages Belinda to buy an expensive dress, she says, "You are thinking that you are like [Burney's] Camilla, and I like Mrs Mitten—novel reading, as I dare say you have been told by your governess, as I was told by mine, and she by hers, I suppose—novel reading for young ladies is the most dangerous—," although she is prevented from completing the thought as Clarence Hervey enters.[109] Even while rejecting the "novel" label in her prefatory and metatextual remarks, Edgeworth implicitly acknowledges it as the most appropriate genre for the overall arc of her story.

At the same time, Edgeworth gestures toward the threat of epistolary fiction by punctuating the novel with long letters from Belinda's aunt Stanhope, who represents the voice of "the world." The letters of this matchmaking aunt—set off visually as standalone insertions in the text—follow the pattern of earlier epistolary novels, in which a young woman "entering the world" might receive advice from a mentor remaining in the country. But, the narrator tells us, these letters have for Belinda "a tendency directly opposite to what

is expected."[110] Instead of fashioning herself, as her aunt advises, on Lady Delacour's "situation and knowledge of the world," Belinda withdraws from public places and receives a rebuke: "I am not such a novice in the affairs of this world, as to be ignorant that when a young lady professes to be of a different opinion from her friends, it is only a prelude to something worse," Mrs. Stanhope writes.[111] However, by demoting these letters from the main narrative and placing them as interjections, and never showing Belinda's responses, Edgeworth removes their authoritative power. They recede into vestiges of a different novelistic subgenre. Just as third-person narration allows Edgeworth to subdue Belinda's aunt's letters, the novel arranges and situates the spectrum of entertainment media for the discriminating reader.

Both Edgeworth and Burney, therefore, pursue a similar strategy across these three novels, whose heroines are represented by the material texts of their eponymous books, circulating through an ever-expanding media market whose center is London. The women must distinguish themselves by demonstrating their discriminating literary taste, improving themselves through their improving literature, just as the authors assured readers that they could feel safe in choosing these works instead of "common novels." The ability to make distinctions between merely popular works and those of lasting literary value was one that each woman saw as both fraught and necessary to her self-conception as an author. In a scrapped introduction to *Cecilia*, for example, Burney fretted over her inability to know whether her novel would be just another of the "copious nothings" in print or prove to be one of the "scarce, but noble productions, which are fostered by the soul of Literature, Genius."[112] "Venturing into the World" through her writing brought to the fore the "precariousness of any power to give pleasure" amid the unstable space of high-society entertainment.[113] In attempting to evaluate her own novels—particularly the final two, *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*, which received mixed or critical reviews—Burney reflected frequently on the relationship between critics and readers, wondering whose opinion would matter in the long run. As she wrote in a letter to her father in November 1796, "The Reviews, however, as they have not *made*, will not, I trust, *mar* me. . . . Works of this [novel] kind are judged always by the *many*: works of science, History & philosophy & voyages & travels, & poetry, frequently owe their fate to the sentiments of the first Critics who brand or extol them." Even as she tried to distinguish her own works from "general Novels," she credited the "general public" with her success.[114] This vacillation remained a defining feature of novel writing as authors continued to face anti-novel discourse through the nineteenth century.

What is clear in the careers of Burney and Edgeworth, however, is that these authors thoroughly understood the entertainment market in which they were operating, as they cannily handled publishers, issued epistolary novels at the height of their popularity, and then experimented with other modes of narration.[115] The circumscribed London "world" of media and communication offered a useful device for creating hierarchies because its entertainments could be more easily mapped and divided than could those of the entire realm of printed materials. The ultimate hierarchization then takes place when the heroines must withdraw from the public "world," a process that is effected by their marriages.[116] And the scene to which these characters withdraw is the provincial, domestic scene of Austen's novels. Burney and Edgeworth's successful negotiation and manipulation of their media environment allowed Austen to practice a form of novel writing that pushed oral and performative media, along with the epistolary novel, to the periphery of her fictional world.

## The Novel of Human Nature: Austen's "New" Fictions

Unlike the novels of Burney and Edgeworth, those of Jane Austen did not constitute central elements of her contemporary media market. While the former authors' works were devoured by fashionable society and earned them thousands of pounds each,[117] Austen struggled for decades to get her works into print and ultimately made only about £700 in total.[118] Nevertheless, her novels faced similar competition from both the social media of "the world" and the ever-growing corpus of female-penned circulating-library novels. And although Austen did not have the London literary and social connections that Burney and Edgeworth enjoyed, as an inveterate novel reader she was in many ways just as attuned to the conditions of the marketplace as her predecessors. Her works' persistent "intertextuality suggests that she conceived of her novels in the context of current fiction, as a part of popular literature, and designed her novels to reach the audiences who were reading contemporary novels."[119] The defense of the novel in *Northanger Abbey* demonstrates how her ability to define novel reading and writing as she did was predicated upon the earlier authors' wrangling with London's volatile media world. Austen, like Burney and Edgeworth, transitioned from epistolary novels to the more encompassing technique of third-person narration, and in doing so she cemented a new understanding of the genre's relationship to the world of public amusements.

A number of scholars have noted Austen's shift from the epistolary novel, represented by the unpublished *Lady Susan* and rewritten *Elinor and Marianne* and, possibly, *First Impressions,* to the free indirect discourse of the six

canonical novels. B. C. Southam has posited that Austen wrote *Lady Susan*, *Elinor and Marianne*, *First Impressions*, and *Susan*, later retitled *Northanger Abbey*, in that order between about 1795 and '98 and that the latter may have been her first work originally conceptualized in third-person narrative.[120] William Galperin draws on this chronology to argue that Austen's achievement of authorial command required the loss of the epistolary novel, since that genre's "indeterminacy of form" meant that it lacked a "metalanguage capable of exerting full control over either speech or written correspondence."[121] Mary Poovey, too, has described epistolary writing as narratologically unstable, writing that for Austen "the epistolary form generates moral anarchy" because it "does not establish a genuinely critical position within the fiction."[122] And Paula Byrne notes that Austen's free indirect discourse may arise out of her "experimentation" with epistolarity, as "the epistolary form cannot provide Austen with a sufficiently powerful means of being both inside and outside her protagonist."[123] I draw on these explanations of Austen's turn to third-person narration to highlight how the author was positioning herself in a larger cultural conversation about the status of the novel, epistolarity, and entertainment media—one in which her predecessors had also been key participants. As I have shown, this sense of the problematic instability of epistolary narration was also central to the changes Burney and Edgeworth made to their fiction writing.

Austen rewrites Burney and Edgeworth, and their own rewriting of the epistolary novel, by focusing on how the genre can best capture "human nature," a phrase she employs several times in relationship to the novels of *Northanger Abbey*. She privileges her style of novel as that which, having reworked both the epistolary form and the social media world, uses the "best-chosen language" to register a refined human nature. Austen takes for granted, that is, that the novel has attained a higher cultural and moral cachet than Italian opera or a masquerade, and focuses instead on its relationship to other printed texts, a position that relies on Burney's and Edgeworth's earlier work in harnessing "the world" as the genesis of the novel's plot. Clifford Siskin points out that the initial critical reception of Austen focused on the "safety" and "comfort" of her novels, and he argues that her works participated in a "taming" of writing that neutralized the apparent threat of sentimental fiction by women: "Her novels were received and have functioned in what were then newly exclusionary terms."[124] In the earlier works, London is the centrifugal center, and everyone circling will eventually be pulled into its reach, even if some eventually manage to escape. But for Austen, "3 or 4 Families in a Country

Village" form the centers, with the metropolis on the edge of the fictional spheres.[125] The proliferation of named private estates as the spaces in which Austen's action occurs—the Mansfields, Northangers, Pemberleys, Longbournes, Hartfields—displays a new understanding of the relationship of the novel to "the world," here conceptualized as both exterior and inferior to the world of the novel.[126]

In many ways, *Northanger Abbey* belongs more to the era of *Cecilia*, *Camilla*, and *Belinda* than to the post–*Mansfield Park* year, 1817, in which it was published. The novel was Austen's first to be written in its complete form and last to appear in print; it was composed in the late 1790s and in 1803 sold to a publisher who never printed the book.[127] Austen acknowledged its many dated aspects—most prominently the satire of the by then-extinct gothic genre—after she had bought back the copyright and was preparing the work for publication. In the advertisement she wrote, "The public are entreated to bear in mind that thirteen years have passed since it was finished, many more since it was begun, and that during that period, places, manners, books, and opinions have undergone considerable changes."[128] Indeed, in that period her own work had begun to influence the definition of the novel genre as a whole, a fact that Walter Scott described in his 1815 review of *Emma* when he commended Austen for "draw[ing] the characters and incidents introduced more immediately from the current of ordinary life than was permitted by the former rules of the novel."[129] At its outset, *Northanger Abbey* seems to be copying the plot structure dominant in novels like Burney's and Edgeworth's,[130] as the young heroine, Catherine Morland, leaves home to travel to a site of public amusement. Austen, however, makes two important adjustments: Catherine, we learn, is "*almost* pretty" but certainly not beautiful, and she will be traveling not to London but to Bath.[131] The author pokes fun at the dramatic devices that require the protagonist's entrance into the world, writing, "if adventures will not befal [*sic*] a young lady in her own village, she must seek them abroad."[132] In her later novels, adventures will befall her heroines in their own villages, but here she writes by tweaking established guidelines.

But if Austen is rewriting an earlier epistolarity in which the social world mapped on to a scene of circulating people and information, how are we to account for her apparent focus in this work on a different novelistic subgenre, the gothic? As Elaine Bander notes, the novels that form the backbone of the defense are significantly not those that Catherine and Isabella read, so that "readers *of* this novel, if they are sensitive to the challenge facing them, may well question whether the narrator is defending *all* novels, or only *some* nov-

els: whether, that is, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is also a work in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed."[133] Austen's positive list of *Cecilia*, *Camilla*, and *Belinda* is followed almost immediately by the negative one of *Castle of Wolfenbach*, *Clermont*, *Mysterious Warnings*, *Necromancer of the Black Forest*, *Midnight Bell*, *Orphan of the Rhine*, and *Horrid Mysteries*—the gothic novels in Isabella Thorpe's pocketbook.[134] The coherence and specificity within each list's subgenre raises the question: is one *Cecilia* worth two *Castle of Wolfenbach*s—or, by the transitive property, one-third *Northanger Abbey*?[135] The list of "good" novels is necessarily shorter, since its select nature reinforces the critical point Austen is making.[136] It may therefore be more useful to view *Northanger* as engaged in a systematic inventory of the novel form than to read it chiefly in terms of its parodic aspects. The work is as much concerned with comparing and contrasting a variety of novelistic conventions as it is with targeting the limited type of the gothic. *Northanger Abbey* takes the skills of taste and discrimination that Cecilia, Camilla, and Belinda modeled and applies them to the current literary genres of the 1790s.

Austen subtly consigns not only the gothic but also the high-society and the epistolary novel to Britain's literary past. Indeed, *Northanger Abbey* concerns itself with the relationship between imaginative and historical genres: as Catherine explains in her conversation with the Tilneys on Beechen Cliff, she dislikes "history, real solemn history," even though, she adds, many of the grandiose speeches in history books must be "must be invention, and invention is what delights me in other books."[137] In the space of these sentences, Austen undercuts a history-novel, fact-fiction binary, showing how the charge of infidelity to nature can also be leveled against respectable history books.[138] Similarly, the relationship of the faux-historical gothic novels to the events of the present is not clear-cut. Catherine learns over the course of the narrative that she should not rely on Radcliffe's novels for an understanding of "human nature, at least in the midland counties of England"; the scrap of paper she finds in the locked chest at Northanger is not a revealing letter or ancient manuscript, but a laundry list.[139] At the same time, her visit to Northanger does turn out to be novelistically surprising and eventful, ending with her abrupt dismissal by General Tilney and eventual, improbable marriage to Henry. As Galperin writes, *Northanger Abbey* "validates the gothic to the degree that it is a genre obsessed with the imbalance of power that currently defines the relationship of men and women. . . . The brunt of the novel's satire on imaginative fiction . . . is sharply mitigated by the fact that Catherine is fundamentally correct in treating the general with apprehension."[140] By exposing the

residue of the gothic past in the realistic present—and of other novelistic subgenres in her own fiction—Austen highlights her ability to undercut the reigning clichés of the late-eighteenth-century literary marketplace.

The obvious nature of the gothic satire that occurs once Catherine reaches Northanger Abbey can thus conceal the multiple levels of analysis on which the novel is operating, a multiplicity of genre that Austen's rewriting of the epistolary form enables. In *Northanger Abbey*, the remainder of the epistolary novel survives in Austen's initial deployment of the structure of the high-society plot as well as in Catherine's circulation through the public places of the Bath social scene. But the epistolary does not come under scrutiny in the ways that the third-person novels of Burney, Edgeworth, Radcliffe, and even Charlotte Lennox do, perhaps because its very narratological instability makes it a moving target. The problems of directly satirizing epistolarity are revealed in Austen's only surviving epistolary novel, *Lady Susan*, which in its attention to the reigning conventions of novelistic narration stands as a neglected counterpart to *Northanger Abbey*. Although the novel is generally read as an unsuccessful early authorial attempt, *Lady Susan*—which was likely written in the 1790s but preserved in a fair copy in 1805[141]—in fact functions as a satire of the epistolary in much the same way that *Northanger Abbey* is a satire of the gothic. The novel plays with the relationship between places and media in a manner that should remind us of both *Northanger* and its high-society predecessors.

From its opening pages, *Lady Susan* demonstrates the unstable nature of the epistolary that I argued led Burney and Edgeworth to experiment with other modes of narration. The novel opens with a letter of Lady Susan's in which she fawns over her brother-in-law, Charles Vernon, and unexpectedly accepts an invitation to stay at his house, in "delightful retirement"; in the very next letter, to her friend Mrs. Johnson, Lady Susan reveals that she is forced to leave her current residence after conducting an affair with her hostess's husband and calls the Vernons' country residence an "insupportable spot."[142] Austen shows that any piece of writing, especially a letter taken out of sequence, can be deceptive and unreliable, just like the heroine, who, in her sister-in-law Mrs. Vernon's words, "has all that knowledge of the world which makes conversation easy, & talks very well, with a happy command of Language, which is too often used I beleive to make Black appear White."[143] Lady Susan spends the novel attempting to conceal her duplicity by using the language of epistolary transparency; as she says to her sister-in-law, "I am not apt to deal in professions, my dear Mrs Vernon, and I never had the convenient talent of affecting sensations foreign to my heart."[144] While she admits to Mrs.

Johnson, "If I am vain of anything it is of my eloquence," she is ultimately undone by what one character calls her "perverted abilities," when a letter to her friend does not arrive in time to prevent her young fiancé, Reginald de Courcy, from learning the truth of her affairs.[145] As Mrs. Johnson writes of this denouement, "What could I do?—Facts are such horrid things!"[146] In London, her fiancé, her lover, and his scorned wife are brought together, contradicting the plausible self-serving narrative she had constructed when living in the country. While Lady Susan attempts to blame her bad reputation on the "illnature [*sic*] of the world,"[147] she is unable to maintain her deceptions when confronted by in-person accusers.

Rather than demonstrating the transparent technique of "writing to the moment," the letters in *Lady Susan* fail to keep up with the action unfolding in real time, so that the reader feels she is losing rather than gaining a clear picture of the events. Even the apparently intimate letters between Susan and Mrs. Johnson contain evasions and misrepresentations, and in their last exchange Mrs. Johnson writes that her husband has forbidden their correspondence. As much as characters try to interpret, they are unable to grasp or communicate the whole truth, and the facts that seem to be revealed in letters are often explained away in unnarrated conversations. In two back-to-back letters, for example, Mrs. Vernon writes that Reginald, her brother, has fallen out with Lady Susan and returned home, an event that leaves her "so much agitated by delight that [she] can scarcely hold a pen." She then has to immediately contradict herself: "Little did I imagine my dear mother, when I sent off my last letter, that the delightful perturbation of spirits I was then in, would undergo so speedy, so melancholy a reverse! . . . The quarrel between Lady Susan and Reginald is made up, and we are all as we were before."[148] Even the novel's final letter, from Mrs. Vernon, ends in an equivocal mode, noting of a potential marriage between Reginald and Lady Susan's daughter Frederica, "At present it is not very likely"; it is left to the narrator to detail their eventual union.[149] Letters in *Lady Susan* frequently fail to elucidate real-world events.

The novel thus seems to narrate the breakdown of the epistolary form: ultimately, the author intervenes in the narrative with a third-person conclusion, writing, "This Correspondence, by a meeting between some of the Parties & a separation between the others, could not, to the great detriment of the Post office Revenue, be continued longer."[150] Susan is banished to (or, in her eyes, rewarded with) a life in London after marrying the foolish aristocrat she has spent the novel trying to foist upon her daughter. Austen not only

sums up her characters' later careers but also comments on the instability she has been fostering throughout the work, writing, "Whether Lady Susan was, or was not, happy in her second [marriage]—I do not see how it could ever be ascertained—for who would take her assurance of it, on either side of the question?—The World must judge from Probability."[151] *Lady Susan* is the only of Austen's novels to end with the protagonist married and living in London rather than married and situated in a provincial or colonial setting. She returns to "the world," still able to manipulate it by capitalizing upon her main skill—a mastery of language in all its slipperiness—but the rest of the characters remain in the country, where the love story between Reginald and Frederica plays out. With Austen's third-person conclusion epistolary narration collapses, as it cannot accommodate her apparent need to explain the actions of her characters. The move foreshadows the genre's insufficiency for her later authorial projects, which will create their own conditions of "probability" rather than allowing the world and her readers to judge.

## "A Chuser of Books!": *Mansfield Park*'s Rejection of the World's Influence

In the final section of this chapter, I will explore the culmination of this marginalization of epistolary worldliness in one of Austen's more self-contained novels, *Mansfield Park*. Austen's long-term effect on the novel genre arose through a process of highlighting, isolating, and defusing particular characteristics and conventions of the eighteenth-century novel by women. She used the novel to close off "the world" and create a space for women to operate, as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue: the "naïve clichés of sentimental literature," revealed in the poor behavior of female characters like Lydia Bennet and Maria Rushworth, become subplots in Austen's novels. Such characters "insist on acting out those very plots Austen would—but therefore cannot—exorcise from her own fiction."[152] But while Austen's juvenilia features a number of female Quixotes, "girls [who] are filled with outlandish fancies derived from their readings in the circulating library,"[153] arguably her most mature novel—*Mansfield Park*—focuses on a literary heroine who must remake those around her in her own image, rather than undergoing a process of education herself. The danger to young women here comes not from their entrance into "the world" but from its occasional, disruptive entrances into the domestic sphere.[154] By far the least worldly of Austen's protagonists, Fanny Price denies the appeal of anything outside Mansfield Park, and eventually teaches others to do so as well.

The action of *Mansfield* stems from the arrival of London-bred siblings Mary and Henry Crawford at the country estate. In her treatment of both the interloping Crawfords and the pivotal episode of the private theatricals, Austen demonstrates that the progression of the novel will be to reject such outside interference and reassert the centrality of the domesticized domain, Mansfield, to the successful continuance of the social and moral order.[155] When the Crawfords appear at Mansfield Park early in the novel, the first concern voiced about them is their sister's "chief anxiety . . . lest Mansfield should not satisfy the habits of a young woman who had been mostly used to London."[156] Although they—much like the private theatrical production of Elizabeth Inchbald's *Lovers' Vows* in which they take an active part—are alluring and exciting, it soon becomes clear that they have fundamental flaws in their treatment of public versus private conduct. Mary's unforgivable sin in the eyes of her would-be husband Edmund Bertram is a failure to understand appropriate public and private, London and Mansfield, behavior: when Edmund's sister Maria leaves her husband for Henry Crawford, Mary's main concern is that the event has become widely known, not that it is inherently immoral. Edmund realizes that Mary's education in London has left her unfit to be his wife: "This is what the world does. For where, Fanny, shall we find a woman whom nature had so richly endowed?—Spoilt, spoilt!"[157] Fanny's unvoiced opinion that "the influence of London [was] very much at war with all respectable attachments" is confirmed in both Henry Crawford's elopement while in London and Mary Crawford's unavoidable espousal of London attitudes at the expense of her domestic future.[158]

The intrusion of the Crawfords into Mansfield Park is soon followed by the intrusion of the private theatricals, which similarly and dangerously blur the line between "the world" and the home. After the idea of acting is introduced by the visiting Mr. Yates—who dreams of the "long [newspaper] paragraph in praise of the private theatricals . . . which would of course have immortalized the whole party for at least a twelvemonth!"[159]—Edmund objects to the proposal on the grounds both that it would draw improper attention to the family and that the play, *Lovers' Vows*, is "exceedingly unfit for private representation."[160] The problem with the theatricals is not performance itself but the irruption of this entertainment medium into the domestic world the author has created for the novel. Among the characters, only Fanny prophetically understands that the play will cause a dangerous mixing of the actors with their roles. When she tells her cousins, "I could not act any thing if you were to give me the world," she is in fact realizing the ways in which they are all constantly

performing; as Austen notes in describing this scene, Fanny was "shocked to find herself at that moment the only speaker in the room, and to feel that almost every eye was upon her"—as if she were an actress on stage.[161] It is when categories such as public and private, or the theater and the novel, become mixed that destabilizing transgressions can occur.

Once again, such destabilization often occurs with the arrival of letters. In the novel's final volume, when the Crawfords leave for London and Fanny returns to her father's house in Portsmouth, epistolarity reasserts itself as letters play an important role in advancing the plot. But the letters that Fanny receives become increasingly disagreeable: first, she is forced to read ongoing declarations of affection from her rejected suitor Henry Crawford within the letters of his sister Mary, "a correspondence which Fanny found quite as unpleasant as she had feared"; next she hears news of her cousin Tom Bertram's fall and illness, causing Fanny to "live upon letters, and pass all her time between suffering from that of to-day, and looking forward to tomorrow's"; and finally she receives Mary's hasty, confusing note enjoining her to ignore the "scandalous, ill-natured rumour" about Henry and Maria Rushworth, which is then elucidated by a gossipy newspaper paragraph regarding "a matrimonial *fracas* in the family of Mr. R. of Wimpole Street."[162] By the end of her stay in Portsmouth, Fanny has come to fear the "sickening knock" of the postman.[163] Beyond the distressing pieces of news they convey, letters throughout the novel are inscrutable texts to the undesigning Fanny, who has not had the polished education of her cousins; while she dotes on a "scrap of paper on which Edmund had begun writing to her, as a treasure beyond all her hopes," she worries that one of her own letters "must appear excessively ill-written, that the language would disgrace a child."[164] In the novel, epistolary writing is yet another worldly, performative realm, as characters like Mary Crawford use letters to impose upon Fanny; Fanny notes of one of Mary's letters to her, "Fanny could not but suppose it meant for [Edmund] to hear; and to find herself forced into a purpose of that kind, compelled into a correspondence which was bringing her the addresses of the man she did not love, and obliging her to administer to the adverse passion of the man she did, was cruelly mortifying."[165] Letters do not reveal true feelings but insert the writers into roles, confusing public and private much as the home theatricals do. The correspondence conveying the devastating events in London to Mansfield Park and Portsmouth leads Fanny to conclude, "I never will—no, I certainly never will wish for a letter again. . . . What do they bring but disappointment and sorrow?"[166] Working within the logic of the eighteenth-century postal system

circulating around the hub of London, letters transmit sordid London events to provincial readers.

As Raymond Williams has pointed out, the country and the city are not static entities but interrelated, comparative configurations. Austen's changed viewpoint on the relationship between the provincial estate and "the world" was one way in which she established the "knowable communities" of her novels.[167] In Austen's published novels, therefore, problems arise for her characters not through their entrances into the London world but rather through the intrusion of that world into the country sphere. In this way, London as a site of high reward and ruinous risk has a similar character as it does in Burney's and Edgeworth's works; the key difference is in the centrality, or lack thereof, of entertainment media to the fictional space. Austen emphasizes the role of reading in conditioning a correct response to "the world," tying Fanny Price to her predecessor, Catherine Morland, and *Mansfield Park* to the earlier novels invested in cataloguing and critiquing existing novelistic possibilities. During the forced visit to her family in Portsmouth, Fanny is dismayed at the lack of books and its consequences for her younger sister, Susan. "There were none in her father's house; but wealth is luxurious and daring—and some of hers found its way to a circulating library. She became a subscriber—amazed at being anything *in propria persona*, . . . to be a renter, a chuser of books! And to be having any one's improvement in view in her choice!"[168] For Fanny and Susan, the works found at the circulating library become a source of improvement. Austen allows her heroines to read novels in a productive rather than dangerous manner, a move that we can see as an important step in the nineteenth-century privileging of the novel as the primary fictional genre.

Austen's extensive correspondence, like her novels, consistently—if jokingly—reflected her thorough knowledge of literary conventions. "I have now attained the true art of letter-writing," she wrote to her sister Cassandra in 1801, "which we are always told, is to express on paper exactly what one would say to the same person by word of mouth; I have been talking to you almost as fast as I could the whole of this letter."[169] Michelle Levy has written that scribal, and in particular epistolary, practices remained important throughout Austen's career. Levy argues that Austen's continual rewriting of her own work, from manuscript and epistolary to print and free indirect discourse, complicates a critical trajectory that sees both her and Romantic-era writing overall progressively transitioning from a scribal to print culture.[170] Likewise, I have argued that a set of features associated with the epistolary novel in the late eighteenth century—both the letter form and the attention to the social

media world—had a lasting impact on the central concerns of Austen's writing. The difference between the novels of Austen and those of Burney and Edgeworth is not one of realism but of what they choose to describe realistically: of which "world" takes center stage in their novels. Austen's attempt to create a trajectory between her works and those of an earlier generation of female authors thus represents the sublimation of the media forms that contributed to the fashion and newsiness of Edgeworth's and Burney's high-society novels. While anti-novel critiques, and novelistic attention to London fashions, continued well beyond Austen, this step in raising the cultural status of the genre helped inaugurate a nineteenth-century media environment in which Austen could mount a positive argument for the novel as a sanitized pleasure that had a generic genealogy. She takes seriously the idea voiced in *Belinda* that London and a provincial estate constitute "two different worlds."[171]

## Conclusion

This analysis of the Burney-Edgeworth-Austen bridge offers an organizational way to think about the changes that took place in the novel genre around the turn of the nineteenth century, a representative sequence of moves in which Edgeworth and Burney's critique of certain forms of pleasure—the oral and performative media of the London world—allowed Austen to reassert pleasure as the central and inherent feature of the novel genre. This shift was part of a literary transition that enabled a narrative of the novel stressing its internal features of entertainment and realism, rather than its external interactions with other media. When Walter Scott reviewed *Emma* in 1815, he enshrined this narrative, arguing that Austen's works "belong to a class of fictions" different from those of the eighteenth century; this new type "has arisen almost in our own times, and . . . draws the characters and incidents introduced more immediately from the current of ordinary life." Scott contrasted Austen's works with "the world" by noting their superiority to the "ephemeral productions which supply the regular demand of watering-places and circulating libraries."[172] Separating the novel from "the world" created a media environment in which readers could make such distinctions. As Henry Tilney tells Catherine Moreland, "The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid."[173] Tilney, like Austen, relies upon the reader's ability to choose between good and bad books rather than reading by genre.

Of course, the work of elevating the novel was not accomplished by the end of Austen's career: the fact that these three authors continued to retell a story of the novel's, and female novel reader's, choice among different genres

and media shows that each writer never saw the problem as solved. Even if Evelina, Cecilia, Belinda, and Camilla withdraw from London to the country, or if Catherine and Fanny reject the intrusion of London into their provincial spheres, the interest of the novels lies in the tense period of deciding and discriminating, not in the domestic life that follows marriage. Similarly, while I argue that the bridge genre of the letter ultimately allowed for the consolidation of print as the primary media environment in which literary, professional writing took shape, I have focused on moments of overlap, upheaval, and interaction in the relationship between manuscript and print throughout the eighteenth century. By the end of Austen's career, bridging had become a residual rather than active feature of print genres. While many fewer texts presented themselves as explicitly epistolary, the practice of personal letter writing had become even more standardized and quotidian, and texts continued to circulate along postal routes. Letters' status as technologies of communication appeared to be taken for granted, so that letters in literature took on thematic rather than material roles, a shift that has influenced subsequent scholarly treatment of epistolarity. The narrative of the novel genre that created a domestic space for its composition and consumption required the series of oppositions between "public places" and private pleasures, between ephemeral epistolarity and third-person world building, and between trendy fashions and works of genius, on which so much of the critical canonization of Austen as the progenitor of nineteenth-century realist fiction has relied.

By the early nineteenth century, worldly, border-crossing epistolarity was fading from public prominence, as the image of the letter as the paradigmatic private, solitary genre became the new standard. As the fervor of experimentation with new forms of print dwindled and the genres of the newspaper, the periodical, the biography, and the novel became entrenched features of the literary marketplace, readers no longer depended upon the accessible, intermedial genre of the letter as a tool of interpretation. Rather, they came to associate these forms with a set of conventions that subordinated manuscript letters to the authoritative voice of the writer in print. In newspapers, professional "paragraph writers" began to replace the network of correspondents that earlier editors had developed. In periodicals as well, the interactive relationship between writer and audience declined as reader feedback was confined to the space of the letters page, rather than serving as a dynamic source of content. And in biographies, letters took on perhaps their most inward-turning functions, with correspondence mined for intimate detail and secret revelation. These changes emerged along the early guideposts manuscript letters provided

in unfamiliar printed terrain, but ultimately these genres achieved their canonical modern status by divesting themselves of their most actively epistolary elements. As the letter's bridging function receded, it was re-confined to the realm of manuscript, and printed letters came to seem paradoxical, fake, or intrusive. The two sides of the bridge—the media environments of manuscript and print—were normatively separated, so that writing a letter was no longer a significant mode of writing to the world.

While scholarship, therefore, has focused on the epistolary novel and its decline at the end of the eighteenth century, this book has shown how the novel was one element in a broader pattern of epistolary print throughout the period. The proliferation of genres that characterized the long eighteenth century, situating print as a still-new medium, demanded a means for readers to acclimatize to the unfamiliar media environment. The everyday genre of the letter, which grew in importance as both a written and printed document throughout the century, became a key player in the expansion of the print marketplace. With the naturalization of these forms of print came a shift to narrative modes that rejected the now-problematic aspects of the bridge genre of the letter: the ways that its blurring of fact-fiction, masculine-feminine, and public-private borders facilitated a range of reader interpretations rather than a single authoritative perspective. However, this was a process that was still underway, and an eighteenth-century sense of the letter remained a lingering element of literary culture for the first few decades of the 1800s. William Wordsworth conceived of the work that came to be known as *The Prelude* as his open-letter "Poem to Coleridge"; Mary Shelley couched *Frankenstein* within sets of epistolary frame narratives; *The Pickwick Papers* begins with the establishment of "the Corresponding Society of the Pickwick Club," whose members are "requested to forward, from time to time, authenticated accounts of . . . the whole of their adventures."[174] As the "postal era" drew to a close, prior to the 1840 postal reforms and the introduction of electrical media of communication in the mid-nineteenth century, the letter continued to be a crucial communications technology for a range of authors. While no longer an essential feature of the print marketplace, the bridge remained available to transport writers and readers across the media world.

# Postscript

Now our lives are changing fast
Hope that something pure can last . . .
It seems strange
How we used to wait for letters to arrive
But what's stranger still
Is how something so small can keep you alive.

—Arcade Fire, "We Used to Wait"

Spike Jonze's 2013 movie *Her* is set in a near-future—2025—Los Angeles in which it becomes normal for people to form intense romantic and platonic relationships with their computer operating systems, which possess artificial intelligence. The main character, Theodore, falls in love with his OS, Samantha, a development that also helps him to excel at his job: composing personal letters for paying customers. Theodore works for a website, beautifulhandwrittenletters.com, where he ghostwrites for boyfriends, wives, granddaughters, mothers, and friends, and mails their "handwritten" notes to loved ones. Theodore, however, does not literally write anything: he dictates a letter to his computer, selects a font based on the customer's handwriting sample, and prints the missive out on his office printer. Eventually, Samantha sends a collection of the letters to a publisher, one that she knows that Theodore likes because "they still print books," and the correspondence becomes a volume: *Letters from Your Life*. The book is not typeset, but rather contains facsimile images of the letters as Theodore sent them. Just as Samantha lacks a physical body—although she expresses her sense of the physicality of her digital components—Theodore's texts lack a physical "hand" producing the "handwritten letters." When the letters become a book, they transform from personal correspondence into artistic authorial productions. Both Theodore's letters and his relationship with his OS occupy a liminal space between embodied activity and the apparently disembodied nature of the digital medium.

While *Her* seems to draw an opposition between the physical and the

digital—with beautifulhandwrittenletters.com as a kind of joke on our current (commodified) nostalgia for the artisanal and antique—it is in fact invested in revealing the multiple layers of materiality in any medium, from the oral and written to the printed and digital. The material authenticity of the operating system, with which Theodore has what is portrayed as a sincere relationship, is compared with that of the paying letter writers, who use multiple layers of mediators to communicate with one another. The viewer is to decide which relationship is more "real." Meanwhile, in the 2010 song "We Used to Wait," the band Arcade Fire (which also wrote the score for *Her*) draws a contrast between the sped-up temporality of the present and the perceived waiting required by the communications systems of the past. The letter, in the song, is "something pure" that "can keep you alive"; the lyrics lament, "I never wrote a letter/ I never took my true heart, I never wrote it down."[1] Emphasizing the metaphorical weight of letters in the early twenty-first century, lead singer Win Butler has described the album *The Suburbs*, on which "We Used to Wait" appears, as "neither a love letter to, nor an indictment of, the suburbs—it is a letter *from* the suburbs."[2] The album imagines an epistolary past that has been irrevocably lost, contrasting it with a technological present that could easily slip into a dark, post-apocalyptic future.

This nostalgia for a "pure" letter expressing the heart and soul of the writer through the medium of handwriting is, I contend, a legacy of the changes to letter writing and postal systems that occurred in the Victorian period in Britain and America and that obscured the earlier understandings of epistolarity I have explored in this book—ending the "postal era" of the long eighteenth century. The major post office reforms of 1839–40 introduced a number of systemic changes that had the long-term effect of giving letters the quintessentially private status by which we understand them today. Postal reform, which reduced the cost of mailing a letter to a penny nationwide, introduced new features such as prepaid postage, envelopes, stamps, and letterboxes, all of which allowed for a more private, secret, and individual use of the mail. No longer would one have to send a letter with all of the family's mail, read aloud upon receipt, or even appear publicly at the post office to claim one's correspondence; now one could put a stamp on an envelope and drop it in the corner mailbox, and receive a letter through the new invention of the door mail slot. As Catherine Golden writes, "By replacing the folded, sealed letter, the envelope became aligned with ideas of progress, as well as with a developing Victorian notion of privacy in public and private spheres. An untidy or poorly sealed letter was, in contrast, linked to 'old-fashioned' ways."[3] In the first year

of nationwide penny postage the volume of mail increased 112 percent, and it continued to double annually until 1850.[4] David Henkin argues that penny postage, which was also adopted in the United States in the late 1840s, constituted a "fundamental shift in the nature of postal business": "the transformation from a post organized around the circulation of newspapers to one organized around the exchange of mail in the modern sense."[5] And Richard Menke has called the post-reform system a "new post age" that emphasized "transparency, inclusiveness, regularity, and a certain pragmatism, all bound up with ideas about the power of private communication to express and strengthen the structure of social relations," which he connects to the goals of the nineteenth-century realist novel.[6] Changes to the structure of the postal system altered the qualities and characteristics that users associated with letters.

Alongside these changes, many of the most prominent features of letter writing that I have tracked throughout the long eighteenth century—the focus on communal, ongoing exchange, the attention to materiality and mediation, and the awareness of a networked connection to "the world"—dropped out of typical epistolary practice. With print assumed as the standard for professional literary texts, manuscript letters were no longer necessary to introduce writers to the new medium, and the divisions between handwriting and printing now seemed innate to the media. Fictional letters tended to become more diaristic and less interested in discussing the processes of transmission. In a transition that had begun in the Romantic period, the letter, along with the novel, became re-inscribed as a kind of communion or communication with the self, establishing many of the ways in which we now view it as an inherently intimate genre. In a discussion of Romantic epistolarity Bernhard Siegert argues, for example, that the letters in *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) show no concern with actual conditions of writing and posting, meaning that "either Werther's letters were never sent or—which amounts to the same thing—they were not letters at all, but a diary: a dead man's letters to the reading public, general delivery."[7] With the postal network installed as a state bureaucracy, it lost its prominent role in the public imagination and instead became an almost subconscious fact of life.

To take a brief example: in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1859–60), letters play a key role in the development of the plot. They influence events throughout the story—early in the novel the heroine, Laura Fairlie, receives an anonymous letter containing accusations against her fiancé, Sir Percival Glyde, who turns out to be the novel's villain—but the characters initially do not display the awareness of letters as circulating material objects that was so

crucial to the eighteenth-century epistolary novel. At a pivotal point, Marian Halcombe, Laura's half-sister, puts a sensitive letter into the household's common post bag, where it is intercepted, the envelope opened and the note replaced with a blank sheet; later, Marian concludes that Sir Percival "must have surprised, by the most dishonourable means, the secret of my application in Laura's interest, to the lawyer."[8] After initially trusting in the privacy of a personal letter, Marian learns the hard way that "letters are not safe in the postbag at Blackwater Park."[9] She remains aware and suspicious of the public nature of letters for the remainder of the story, scrutinizing envelope seals, handwriting, and postmarks. Ultimately, however, it is by bringing together a variety of manuscript documents, including letters, a church register book, a death certificate, and a journal, that the protagonists are able to "strik[e] down the whole conspiracy at a blow with the irresistible weapon of plain fact."[10] After letters have forced themselves forward as material texts whose physicality matters more than the words on the page, they are once again reified as immanent "written evidence,"[11] a move that solves the plot by giving them an uncomplicated status as testimonial "proof." This secondary status for letters as plot points and backup evidence was common in the Victorian novel.

Just as, in the 1840s, a standard postal system featuring uniform postage nationwide replaced the eighteenth century's tangle of mail costs and routes, the physical transportation structure I have used as a symbol in this book—London Bridge—also became streamlined and modernized in the Victorian period. In 1831, old London Bridge, which was dilapidated and blocked river traffic, was replaced with New London Bridge, a granite construction standing on five wide arches that lacked the former span's edifices and tunnels. The new bridge was hailed as an "improvement" worthy of the "age of science." As an author in the *Penny Magazine* wrote, the old facility, "which used to attract wonders by its patchwork antiquity, was swept away, water-works and all; and in its place stands a magnificent bridge . . . which allows free passage, above and below, to the mighty rush of London commerce."[12] The bridge, now one of several crossing the Thames within the city, was no longer a destination or a center of distribution; instead, it became a straightforward channel from one bank to another, particularly since it served to deliver railway passengers to London Bridge Station on the south bank. Just as the nineteenth-century definition of the private, individual letter superseded earlier conceptions of the letter, the erasure of old London Bridge reflected new ideas of a bridge's function in a modern commuter society.

The legacy of the Victorian transformation of the letter into the archetypal

location of privacy, sincerity, and selfhood is particularly apparent in relation to our current media environment, where questions about the privacy and publicity of texts are once again at the fore of contemporary debate.[13] If the letter's bridging function declined in the nineteenth century, epistolary connections have reemerged as active agents in the present-day negotiations between written, printed, and digital media. A variety of born-digital genres, including listservs, blogs, and commenting forums, rely on what we could see as eighteenth-century epistolary features to build interactive communities. They conceptualize themselves as having circumscribed, self-selecting groups of readers whom they address in a conversational tone and expect to constantly respond in writing. As professional newspapers have reduced staff reporters, they have come to rely on commenters and "citizen journalists" who provide leaks, photos, and analysis; for example, the home pages of both the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* now feature prominent links with instructions for readers to confidentially transmit news tips. Charlie Beckett writes of such "networked journalism" that it "is a process not a product. The journalist still reports, edits, packages the news. But the process is continually shared. The networked journalist changes from being a gatekeeper who delivers to a facilitator who connects."[14] In the same way as the Victorian view of the personal, private letter still stands as the archetypal letter, the mid-twentieth-century understanding of the professional, objective newspaperman has become the paradigm of journalism. But with the prehistory of newspapers established in this book, we can see the changes now occurring in the news industry as, in many ways, a return to eighteenth-century norms rather than a twenty-first-century innovation.

By tracing the emergence, dominance, and decline of the letter as the central bridge genre of the long eighteenth century,[15] we can better understand the processes of continuity and discontinuity across genres that define literary history and that are particularly apparent in contemporary comparisons between "hard copy" and digital media.[16] We can also identify bridge genres other than the letter operating today. Genres that bridge old and new media have made possible the explosion of the Web 2.0 environment that unites social networking with multimedia interaction in the form of digital images, video, audio, and text. Contemporary genres such as the audiovisual clip or what Dan Cohen has called the "blessay"—a piece of writing shorter than an academic article but longer than a blog post that is "a manifestation of the convergence of journalism and scholarship in mid-length forms online"[17]—have allowed new users to feel at home in the digital environment to an extent

that seemed unattainable 10 or 20 years ago. The coinage of the term "digital native" to describe those born or educated after the widespread adoption of digital technologies implies that the current bridges linking digital with print or film media also will fade into the background—at the point when, once again, the new medium is familiar enough that bridges to previous forms are no longer necessary. When a bridge genre establishes itself as an expected element of a new medium, it becomes a vestigial feature rather than an effective force, a transformation that can work to obscure the important functions the bridge performed in the transitional media moment in which it was necessary. But emphasizing the bridging purpose of these present-day genres demonstrates the wide-ranging potential of the bridge genre concept as a means to understand the parallel processes of genre and media shift.

Bridge genres help us understand the *how* of literary history. Mikhail Bakhtin highlighted the primary role of genre in that history, "whose great heroes turn out to be first and foremost genres, and whose 'trends' and 'schools' are but second- or third-rank protagonists."[18] Bridge genres make it possible to examine what he called the "great historical destinies of genres,"[19] revealing the local procedures and processes by which large-scale change—the emergence of print as the primary medium for journalistic, scientific, and literary texts, or the migration of day-to-day communication onto digital platforms—actually takes place. And they focus on the connections between or across texts, genres, and media rather than on confirming their divergence or competition. In the eighteenth century, expansions in epistolary genres and postal systems encouraged people to imagine themselves as connected by networks of written communication. They described these networks as a "world" that they could enter by letter writing. *Writing to the World* has explored the use of letters in the world of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century print in order to offer a prehistory of the system of interactive communication that has taken center stage in the era of the World Wide Web. It provides new insights into how users understand and adapt to media shifts by showing the many stages, routes, and relays between "old" manuscript and "new" print.

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## *Introduction*

1. Daniel Defoe, *A Review of the Affairs of France*, ed. John McVeagh, vol. 1, *1704–1705* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2003), 4, italics converted to roman type.

2. *Spectator* No. 16, March 19, 1711, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 62.

3. *Rambler* No. 10, April 21, 1750, Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler,* ed. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 51.

4. *Tatler* No. 7, April 26, 1709, Richard Steele, *The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 66.

5. Dror Wahrman, *Mr. Collier's Letter Racks: A Tale of Art and Illusion at the Threshold of the Modern Information Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 20, emphasis in original.

6. Michael F. Suarez SJ, "Towards a Bibliometric Analysis of the Surviving Record, 1701–1800," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain,* ed. Michael F. Suarez SJ and Michael L. Turner, vol. 5, *1695–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 44.

7. *Raillerie a La Mode Consider'd: Or The Supercilious Detractor* (London: 1673), 43.

8. Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 31.

9. A major strand of twentieth-century literary and critical thought has described the letter as a particularly feminine genre that lent itself to fictional portrayal of women's interiority. The takeoff in epistolary fiction beginning in the 1740s, and the growing association between women and novels during that time, created an image of the letter as a site for the female self to express its inner life and emotions. See, for example, Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982); Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters, and the Novel* (New York: AMS Press, 1980); Linda S. Kauffman, *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre, and Epistolary Fictions* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986).

10. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 48–49.

11. As John Guillory writes, the need for a physical form in which to transmit communications also endangers them: "the medium makes communication possible and also possible to fail." Likewise, Bernhard Siegert points out that a fantasy of direct, transparent communication elides mediation: "That a letter always can also not arrive—can be intercepted, purloined—is nothing less than the condition allowing it to reach its destination." John Guillory, "Genesis of the Media Concept," *Critical Inquiry* 36, no. 2 (Winter 2010): 334; Bernhard Siegert, *Relays: Literature as an Epoch of the Postal System* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 11–12.

12. *Rambler,* No. 152, Aug. 31, 1751, Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, ed. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. 5 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 43.

13. Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 91.

14. Lynne Magnusson, "Mixed Messages and Cicero Effects in the Herrick Family Letters of the Sixteenth Century," in *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain*, ed. James Daybell and Andrew Gordon (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 134.

15. The value of network analysis, in Bruno Latour's terms, is precisely to reveal unexpected connections: "To *trace a network* is thus always to reconstitute by a *trial* . . . the antecedents and the consequences, the precursors and the heirs, the ins and outs, as it were, of a being." Bruno Latour, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 41.

16. John Tavernier, *The Entertaining Correspondent; Or, Newest and Most Compleat Polite Letter Writer* (Berwick, 1759), 2, 3.

17. *The Lady's Preceptor* (London, 1743), 59.

18. While Roger Chartier contends that "no one would argue today that 'this' (the printing press) killed 'that' (the manuscript)" and that "it is now recognized that printing, at least for the first four centuries of its existence, did not lead to the disappearance of handwritten communication or manuscript publication," there are few full-length studies of the interaction between manuscript and print media in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Scholars tend to divide the media as areas of inquiry—focusing their investigations on either manuscript or print—and to see a seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century endpoint for the continuation of manuscript as a public, professional medium. See, for example, Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book*; Cecile M. Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print: Reading and Writing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999). Roger Chartier, "The Printing Revolution: A Reappraisal," in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. Sabrina A. Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 398.

19. Christina Lupton, *Knowing Books: The Consciousness of Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), xi.

20. Tavernier, *The Entertaining Correspondent*, 4.

21. Ibid., 2.

22. Eve Tavor Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xvii. Dena Goodman adds that "the practice [of reading aloud] was so common that it was necessary to state explicitly if one wanted a particular letter to stay confidential." Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 142.

23. James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512–1635* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 216.

24. Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500–1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 184.

25. Diana G. Barnes, *Epistolary Community in Print, 1580–1664* (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 102.

26. Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, vol. 2 (London, 1783), 297.

27. The British Library's English Short Title Catalogue (estc.bl.uk/) lists 7,225 titles employing the "letter(s) from . . . to" title formulation in the entire corpus and 6,585 from 1650 to 1801, showing that the genre was at its height during the long eighteenth century.

28. *A Letter from a Gentleman in Philadelphia to His Friend in the Country* (Philadelphia, 1742), n. pag.

29. *A Letter from a Gentleman in the Country to His Friend in Town* (New York, 1732), n. pag.

30. *A Letter from a Gentleman in New-York, to His Friend in London* (New York, 1733), n. pag.

31. Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 40.

32. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1987), 3.

33. Ibid., 9.

34. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 8.

35. Ralph Cohen, "History and Genre," *New Literary History* 17, no. 2 (1986): 206.

36. Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), 2.

37. Gerard Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 64, 73. I focus here not on the epistolary mode or "epistolarity," a nebulous category that could be located in almost any text, but rather on the letter genre as it was identified by contemporaries and used to create and format new printed texts. For a discussion of epistolarity as "the use of the letter's formal properties to create meaning," see Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form*, 4.

38. While my work thus shares with the methodology of New Formalism an interest in the ways that formal features shape the processes of reading and writing, my attention throughout to medium and to the role of genre in navigating media shift broadens the focus from primarily literary forms. This stance is a question of emphasis rather than opposition since, as Robert Kaufman points out, "the material (or materiality) gets to count as material in the first place by virtue of its relationship to an act—provisional though it be—of framing, an act of form. By the same token, the formal gets to be formal only by its momentary, experimental coincidence with the material." As J. Paul Hunter notes in an insightful analysis of the supposed binarism of the couplet form, close reading and formal analysis "can be an important tool for baring historical practices that have become obscured or even invisible to us in later ages or other cultures." Form is central to my analysis of letters, but I argue that the letter genre mobilizes a variety of aspects that go beyond the formal. Robert Kaufman, "Everybody Hates Kant: Blakean Formalism and the Symmetries of Laura Moriarty," *Modern Language Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (March 2000): 135; J. Paul Hunter, "Formalism and History: Binarism and the Anglophone Couplet," *Modern Language Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (March 2000): 129.

39. Sandra Macpherson, "A Little Formalism," *ELH* 82, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 390. Jonathan Kramnick and Anahid Nersessian, meanwhile, argue against attempts to strictly parse "form," writing that "the varieties of form arise only in the shifting context of formalism, only in the practice of critical explanation." In my critical practice, I focus on the importance of the category of genre over and above that of form. Jonathan Kramnick and Anahid Nersessian, "Form and Explanation," *Critical Inquiry* 43, no. 3 (Spring 2017): 665.

40. *Rambler* No. 152, Aug. 31, 1751, Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, ed. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. 5 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 45.

41. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 28.

42. James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 3.

43. Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2015), 5.

44. These are "basic media," but they are rarely cleanly divided in the way such a list would suggest. My work draws out the ways in which many if not most (if not all) texts can be analyzed as multimedia in nature. It is also important to remember that both manuscript and print rely

on the same physical substrate in the artistic sense of "medium": that is, paper. However, while all paper until the nineteenth century was produced in the same way—by recycling cloth rags—paper would have to be treated differently for either writing or printing. Writing paper requires more sizing, the gelatin layer added to dry paper that allows ink to sit on top of the paper rather than bleeding through it. Because printing requires less ink, paper for printing could be lower quality, although some books would include additional sizing around the margins for handwritten notes—again emphasizing the presumption of mixed-media use. Timothy Barrett, "European Papermaking Techniques 1300–1800," *Paper through Time: Nondestructive Analysis of 14th- through 19th-Century Papers,* Institute of Museum and Library Services, University of Iowa Center for the Book, 2012, http://paper.lib.uiowa.edu/european.php.

45. This point is made by several theorists of genre; as Ralph Cohen writes, "A genre does not exist independently; it arises to compete or to contrast with other genres, to complement, augment, interrelate with other genres. Genres do not exist by themselves; they are named and placed within hierarchies or systems of genres, and each is defined by reference to the system and its members. A genre, therefore, is to be understood in relation to other genres, so that its aims and purposes at a particular time are defined by its interrelation with and differentiation from others." Cohen, "History and Genre," 207. See also Thomas Beebee, *The Ideology of Genre: A Comparative Study of Generic Instability* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 28.

46. Genette, *The Architext: An Introduction*, 64.

47. M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 65.

48. Guillory, "Genesis of the Media Concept," 321.

49. My identification of a constructed literary category of "the world" draws from Hannah Arendt's distinction between the world and the earth in *The Human Condition*. For Arendt, "the world" emerges as part of the "*vita activa*" of labor, work, and action: "Work provides an 'artificial' world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness." Similarly, while Robert Darnton and Anthony Grafton each have highlighted the role of the terms "the world" or *le monde* in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Republic of Letters, these terms served a more metaphorical than actual purpose in that elite intellectual context, referring to the network of scholarly correspondence and connection. The constant references to the "the world" in eighteenth-century texts represent an extension and elaboration of this earlier usage. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 7; Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 19–20; Anthony Grafton, *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 1.

50. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), vii–viii.

51. Margaret Cavendish, *Playes* (London, 1662), 132.

52. Richard Graves, *Columella; Or, the Distressed Anchoret*, vol. 2 (London: 1779), 243, 245, italics converted to roman type.

53. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991). Habermas argues that "the world" was the public sphere, "the world of a critically debating reading public that at the same time was just evolving within the broader bourgeois strata." However, I argue that "the world" conveyed a level of media specificity that is lacking in Habermas's account, in which the specificities of media of communications are dissolved into the "public sphere." Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 106.

54. Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres,* 297.

55. Amanda Gilroy and W. M. Verhoeven, "Introduction," in *Epistolary Histories: Letters, Fiction, Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 10.

56. D. F. McKenzie, "Speech-Manuscript-Print," *Library Chronicle of the University of Texas at Austin* 20, no. 1–2 (1990): 87.

57. Ann Blair, "Errata Lists and the Reader as Corrector," in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. Sabrina A. Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 36–37; Peter Stallybrass, "'Little Jobs': Broadsides and the Printing Revolution," in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. Sabrina A. Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 340–41; David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 11; Eve Tavor Bannet, "Printed Epistolary Manuals and the Transatlantic Rescripting of Manuscript Culture," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 36 (2007): 18.

58. Marshall McLuhan points out that an early definition of "communication" was transportation along roads, bridges, and waterways, and that the Greek origin of "metaphor" signifies "to carry across or transport." As he writes, "It was not until the advent of the telegraph that messages could travel faster than a messenger. Before this, roads and the written word were closely interrelated." For McLuhan, both roads and writing are media; the road enables communication and is also a metaphor for it. Similarly, my use of "bridge genre" invokes both literal and metaphorical bridges. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 89, 93.

59. Adam Sternbergh, "Smile, You're Speaking Emoji: The Rapid Evolution of a Wordless Tongue," *New York Magazine*, November 17, 2014, http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2014/11/emojis-rapid-evolution.html. The article goes on to describe emoji Unicode computer programmers as "the modern analog to the devout monks who sat and diligently created illuminated manuscripts so that great written works of theology could be widely shared."

60. Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 27.

61. James How, *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter-Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 8.

62. Nathan Bailey, *The Antiquities of London and Westminster* (London, 1722), 44; Henri Misson, *M. Misson's Memoirs and Observations in His Travels over England* (London, 1719), 22.

63. Henry R. Plomer, "The Booksellers of London Bridge," *The Library* s2–IV, no. 13 (January 1903): 34.

64. James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 26.

65. Quoted in ibid., 146.

66. Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), xx, 13.

67. Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts*, 295.

68. Siegfried Zielinski, *Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 7, 10.

## *Chapter 1 · Circulating News*

1. While Joad Raymond has credited the Civil War–era newsbook with the "invention of the newspaper," arguing that the weekly quarto publications introduced regularity in length, exact periodicity, and continued titles, I agree with James Sutherland that the *Gazette* was a "complete innovation, replacing the traditional format of the newsbook with a half sheet in folio: a two-page newspaper, set for the first time in double columns, and costing 1*d*." Charles

Clark adds: "The great contribution of the *London Gazette* to newspaper history as a whole was really its form rather than its function: its leap to what we recognize even today as the newspaper format." And while Raymond notes that with the newsbooks there was a "rapid turnover in titles," the *Gazette* has published continuously from 1665 to the present. Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks, 1641–1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9, 22; James Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and Its Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 11; Charles Clark, *The Public Prints: The Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1665–1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 26.

2. Joad Raymond, "The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere," in *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Joad Raymond (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 118.

3. C. John Sommerville, *The News Revolution in England: Cultural Dynamics of Daily Information* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

4. Ian Atherton, "The Itch Grown a Disease: Manuscript Transmission of News in the Seventeenth Century," in *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Joad Raymond (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 53.

5. P. M. Handover, *A History of the London Gazette, 1665–1965* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1965), 5–6.

6. Newspapers, newsbooks, and corantos differed in both form and content: the newspaper was a single folio half-sheet printed on both sides, the newsbook was typically an eight-page quarto and featured more partisan news, and the coranto was a 24-page quarto. Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper*, 8.

7. Muddiman clashed with Under-Secretary of State Joseph Williamson over Muddiman's right to continue his profitable newsletter service, which Williamson wanted to take over, while editing the *Gazette*. In February 1666 Williamson replaced Muddiman with lawyer Charles Perrot, who continued as editor on and off until 1671. J. G. Muddiman, *The King's Journalist, 1659–1689* (London: John Lane, 1923), 183–86.

8. Handover, *A History of the London Gazette*, 16–17.

9. Quoted in Muddiman, *The King's Journalist*, 195.

10. See, for example, Atherton, "The Itch Grown a Disease," 53; Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and Its Development*, 4. Raymond calls the *Gazette* "an instrument of state propaganda, intended to control rumour and occlude alternative news sources" even as he notes that contemporary readers praised the paper and that its sales remained high even after the introduction of competitors starting in 1695. Raymond, "The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere," 126–27.

11. David Randall, "Recent Studies in Print Culture: News, Propaganda, and Ephemera," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2004): 457.

12. In his Foucauldian analysis, Davis argues that the characteristic of the "news/novels discourse" was an ambivalence or indifference to the factual or fictional nature of newspapers and novels—"genres were not defined by their allegiance to truth-telling or invention"—but this is only true as a partial descriptor of the early novel. While readers might worry about or contest the accuracy of particular news stories, they understood the goal of the newspaper genre as factual reporting. Lennard Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 67 and passim. See also J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990); Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

13. Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500–1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 23.

14. One of the letters in the work's first volume has been anthologized as Rochester's in Felix

Pryor, ed., *The Faber Book of Letters: Letters Written in the English Language, 1578–1939* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1988).

15. John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, *Familiar Letters: Written by the Right Honourable John Late Earl of Rochester, And Several Other Persons of Honour and Quality* (London, 1697), n. pag.

16. Ibid., 62.

17. Ibid., n. pag.

18. Although printed letters also appeared before the seventeenth century, they were not as widespread. Lisa Jardine writes that printed editions of humanists' correspondence began appearing as early as 1515, although these would have been in Latin. The first letter-writing manual in English appeared in 1534, and other books and volumes of collected letters were published in the second half of the sixteenth century. But Gary Schneider points out that, while letter collections in manuscript and print were common on the continent from the fourteenth century on, not many were printed in England until the 1640s, and the genre took off in the 1690s. Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 14; Diana G. Barnes, *Epistolary Community in Print, 1580–1664* (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 6–12; Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity*, 50. The English Short Title Catalogue records more than 29,000 works with the words "letter(s)" or "epistle(s)" in their titles between 1700 and 1799, against 9,735 in the seventeenth century and 717 in the sixteenth. There were also more works using these titles between 1660 and 1669, about 5,300, than in the first six decades of the century, which saw 4,500. Although these numbers partly reflect the larger overall print output in the eighteenth century, they show a takeoff in printed letters in the period.

19. Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer have documented how the publication of the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* depended on existing networks of scholarly correspondence that allowed for the "virtual witnessing" through which experimental results and "matters of fact" could be verified. My argument extends the work of Shapin and Schaffer by showing how the same methods of verification via letter were occurring in a variety of seventeenth-century genres. Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 55–65.

20. Howard Robinson, *The British Post Office: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1948), 46–48.

21. Although, as Mark Brayshay has shown, private use of government postal routes was allowed as early as 1635, this service depended on the post being farmed out to individuals with contracts to carry letters, and it was expensive and geographically limited. The network was also significantly disrupted by the Civil War. The 1657 and 1660 acts, by contrast, marked the start of a national Post Office. Mark Brayshay, "Conveying Correspondence: Early Modern Letters Bearers, Carriers, and Posts," in *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain*, ed. James Daybell and Andrew Gordon (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 60–62, 65.

22. Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 25.

23. Eve Tavor Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xx.

24. Susan Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers, 1660–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 11.

25. Lynne Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 63; Les Perelman, "The Medieval Art of Letter Writing: Rhetoric as Institutional Expression," in *Textual Dynamics of the Professions: Historical and Contemporary Studies of Writing in Professional Communities*, ed. James G. Paradis and Charles Bazerman (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 111.

26. Malcolm Richardson, "The Fading Influence of the Medieval Ars Dictaminis in En-

gland after 1400," *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 19, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 230–31.

27. Ibid., 226, 242.

28. Quoted in Lisa Jardine, "Reading and the Technology of Textual Affect: Erasmus's Familiar Letters and Shakespeare's King Lear," in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 79.

29. Ibid., 91.

30. James Daybell and Andrew Gordon, "Introduction: The Early Modern Letter Opener," in *Cultures of Correspondence in Early Modern Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 5, 7.

31. Barnes, *Epistolary Community in Print, 1580–1664*, 5.

32. Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America*, 25.

33. James How, *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter-Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's "Clarissa"* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 11–12.

34. Robinson, *The British Post Office: A History*, 64.

35. Ibid., 70–73.

36. Robert Darnton, *The Literary Underground of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 4. Darnton, however, stresses that in the Republic of Letters this phrase referred to a "sociocultural elite" in opposition to Grub Street writers.

37. The postal system expanded rapidly and continually throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While a contract to run the service was granted in the 1650s for about £10,000, in 1688 the net postal income was up to £90,000, and it rose to £108,000 in 1693–94, £116,000 in 1697–98, £148,000 in 1699–1700, and £156,000 by 1703–04. Since rates were relatively static, the increase reflects greater volume of use. Robinson, *The British Post Office: A History*, 40–42, 80–81.

38. Roger Chartier, "Secrétaires for the People?: Model Letters of the Ancien Régime: Between Court Literature and Popular Chapbooks," in *Correspondence: Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 66, 78.

39. M. R., *A President for Young Pen-Men; Or, The Letter-Writer.* (London, 1615), n. pag.

40. Bannet, *Empire of Letters*, ix.

41. M. R., *A President for Young Pen-Men*, n. pag.

42. Roger Chartier, "Introduction: An Ordinary Kind of Writing: Model Letters and Letter-Writing in Ancien Régime France," in *Correspondence: Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century,* ed. Roger Chartier, Alain Boureau, and Cécile Dauphin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 4. Various studies of letter-writing manuals have made a similar point, warning scholars against assuming too much about actual letter-writing practices based on epistolary manuals. See Roger Chartier, Alain Boureau, and Cécile Dauphin, eds., *Correspondence: Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Bannet, *Empire of Letters*.

43. For example, Daybell writes, "The colour of a seal . . . , the placement of a signature on the page, the size, type and quality of paper used for writing, how a letter was folded, and whether it was written by a secretary or in a correspondent's own hand (and indeed the type of script employed) all carried social signs that would have been readily understood at the time by those familiar with early-modern epistolary culture and practices." James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512–1635* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 16.

44. Osborne's letters were published in the Victorian period after being preserved in family archives. Extracts of the letters first appeared in 1836 in Thomas Courtenay's *Memoirs of the*

*Life, Works and Correspondence of Sir William Temple, Bart*. and were discussed by Thomas Babington Macaulay in his *Edinburgh Review* article on Courtenay's biography. Sir Edmund Parry edited the first solo, largely complete edition of the letters, based on notes from the originals made by Sarah Rose Longe, whose family held the papers (the Longes were distant descendants of the Osbornes). In 1891 the British Museum acquired the original letters. Kenneth Parker, "Introduction," in Dorothy Osborne, *Letters to Sir William Temple* (London: Penguin, 1987), 12–17.

45. Dorothy Osborne, *Letters to Sir William Temple* (London: Penguin, 1987), 57.

46. Ibid., 75.

47. Ibid., 74.

48. For further discussion of "writing to the moment," see chapter 3.

49. Osborne, *Letters to Sir William Temple*, 58, 74, 145.

50. Ibid., 131.

51. Ibid., 164.

52. Ibid., 160.

53. John Locke to Cornelius Lyde, 30 March 1696, MA 231.11, Collection of autograph letters signed (24), a letter signed, and a document signed: London and Oates [near Harlow, Essex], to Cornelius Lyde and others, Morgan Library, New York.

54. John Locke to Cornelius Lyde, 29 October 1695, MA 231.8, Morgan Lib., New York.

55. John Locke to Cornelius Lyde, 14 February 1696, MA 231.5, Morgan Lib., New York.

56. John Dryden to Elizabeth Steward, 12 December 1698, MA 130.7, Collection of autograph letters signed: London, to Jacob Tonson, Mrs. Elizabeth Steward, and William Walsh, Morgan Lib., New York.

57. John Dryden to Elizabeth Steward, 4 March 1699, MA 130.6, Morgan Lib., New York.

58. John Dryden to Elizabeth Steward, 7 November 1699, MA 130.10, Morgan Lib., New York; John Dryden to Elizabeth Steward, 26 November 1699, MA 130.11, Morgan Lib., New York.

59. John Dryden to Elizabeth Steward, 4 March 1699, MA 130.6, Morgan Lib., New York.

60. Some customers bought individual copies of newspapers at booksellers' shops or from street hawkers, but many received their papers on a quasi-subscription basis from booksellers who sent the papers through the mail. Printers and newsletter writers formed relationships with the clerks of the road, employees of the Post Office, who acted as middlemen in distributing newspapers. Whyman, *The Pen and the People*, 52.

61. *London Gazette,* issue 20, Jan. 18, 1666, http://www.london-gazette.co.uk (hereafter cited as *LG*). For citations of the *London Gazette*, and all periodicals cited in this volume, I have silently changed old-style dates to new style.

62. *LG,* issue 33, March 5, 1666.

63. For discussions of each of these genres, see, respectively, Ian Atherton, "The Itch Grown a Disease," 39–65; Thomas Pettitt, "Journalism vs. Tradition in the English Ballads of the Murdered Sweetheart," in *Ballads and Broadsides in Britain, 1500–1800*, ed. Patricia Fumerton, Anita Guerrini, and Kris McAbee (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2010), 75–90; Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper*; Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

64. *The Monethly Intelligencer* (London, 1660), 2.

65. James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 89–90.

66. Ibid., 58.

67. Paul Arblaster, "Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers: England in a European System of Communications," in *News Networks in Seventeenth Century Britain and Europe*, ed. Joad Raymond (New York: Routledge, 2006), 19.

68. For example, the founding of the shipping newspaper now known as *Lloyd's List* in the 1690s followed the same pattern as that of the *Gazette*: Edward Lloyd, a coffeehouse proprietor, set up a network of agents and correspondents and arranged for special treatment at the Post Office in order to make his paper reliable for merchants: "The organization of accredited correspondents in all the major ports and the elaborate preferential arrangements with the Post Office that sped the flow of reports to Lloyd's office helped establish and maintain the reputation of the newspaper." John McCusker, "British Commercial and Financial Journalism before 1800," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. Michael F. Suarez SJ and Michael L. Turner, vol. 5, *1695–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 462.

69. Raymond, "The Newspaper, Public Opinion, and the Public Sphere," 118.

70. Quoted in Dror Wahrman, *Mr. Collier's Letter Racks: A Tale of Art and Illusion at the Threshold of the Modern Information Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 20.

71. Will Slauter, "The Paragraph as Information Technology: How News Traveled in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World," *Annales HSS* 67, no. 2 (June 2012): 255, 260.

72. *LG,* issue 1, Nov. 7, 1665.

73. *LG,* issue 15, Jan. 1, 1666.

74. *LG,* issue 1, Nov. 7, 1665.

75. *LG,* issue 12, Dec. 21, 1665.

76. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 25.

77. Arblaster, "Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers: England in a European System of Communications," 19.

78. P. M. Handover, *A History of the London Gazette, 1665–1965* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1965), 17.

79. It is certain that censorship of printed publications played a part in both forming conventions for those publications and driving some readers and writers to manuscript circulation. In 1662, the House of Commons banned the printing of its votes and proceedings, a prohibition that formally lasted until the nineteenth century, although journalists found a variety of ways to skirt it. But censorship was not, as some critics have implied, the primary reason for the continued importance of manuscript news. On the one hand, there were periodic efforts to restrict both print and manuscript publications; during the Dutch wars, for example, the Crown barred discussion of ship movements in newspapers and newsletters, and in 1662 and 1675 censors argued that both print and manuscript should be monitored. And on the other hand, the extent and efficacy of censorship for printed works depended on individual readers whose practices varied widely. David McKitterick and James Raven have both argued that the enforcement of censorship regulations, whether in regard to print or manuscript publications, was sporadic and erratic. Muddiman, *The King's Journalist, 1659–1689*, 125, 204; Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 74; David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 152; Raven, *The Business of Books*, 83.

80. Atherton, "The Itch Grown a Disease," 47, 53.

81. Sutherland, *The Restoration Newspaper and Its Development*, 8.

82. John Childs, "The Sales of Government Gazettes during the Exclusion Crisis, 1678–81," *English Historical Review* 102, no. 402 (January 1987): 104; Henry L. Snyder, "The Circulation of Newspapers in the Reign of Queen Anne," *The Library* s5–XXIII, no. 3 (1968): 210–12, 216–17.

83. Muddiman, *The King's Journalist, 1659–1689*, 166; Sabrina A. Baron, "The Guises of Dissemination in Early Seventeenth-Century England: News in Manuscript and Print," in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (London: Routledge, 2001), 50.

84. Atherton, "The Itch Grown a Disease," 57.

85. Joseph Williamson to James Butler, Duke of Ormond, 30 January 1664, News-letters addressed to the Duke of Ormond on public affairs in England and Europe, 1662–84, MS. Carte 222, fol. 46, The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford; *LG,* issue 544, Feb. 2, 1671.

86. Henry Ball to Sir Willoughby Aston, 20 July 1672, Newsletters, March to December James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, MS Osborn b97, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, New Haven, CT.

87. Christian Cole to Charles Townshend, Viscount Townshend, 3 October 1710, Autograph letter signed: Venice, to Lord Townshend, MA unassigned, Morgan Lib., New York.

88. Daniel Woolf, "News, History and the Construction of the Present in Early Modern England," in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Brendan Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (London: Routledge, 2001), 80.

89. Carteret to Crawfurd, 11 February 1723, State Papers Foreign, France, SP 78/178/25, National Archives, Kew, UK.

90. Adam Cardonnel to Under Secretary George Tilson, 25 June 1708, State Papers Foreign, Military Expeditions, SP 87/4/26, National Archives, Kew, UK.

91. As a number of scholars have shown, the creation of the category of the "fact" and its association with impartiality/objectivity was an ongoing epistemic concern in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. See Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*; Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Hilary Putnam, *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichtomoy and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007); Davis, *Factual Fictions.* I argue that the association of letters with self-authenticating facts was one element of this larger shift.

92. Quoted in Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper*, 53.

93. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 48.

94. Raven, *The Business of Books*, 83, 86–89; Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts*, 186–87.

95. Michael Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole: A Study of the Origins of the Modern English Press* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1987), 43.

## *Chapter 2 • Questions and Answers*

1. Nathan Bailey, *The Antiquities of London and Westminster* (London, 1722), n. pag.

2. R.B., *Historical Remarks and Observations upon the Ancient and Present State of London and Westminster* (London, 1703), 75.

3. James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 26; C. Paul Christianson, *Memorials of the Book Trade in Medieval London: The Archives of Old London Bridge* (Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1987), 2.

4. As another example, think of the viewing platform on Brooklyn Bridge: most pedestrians only make it half way across before turning around to walk back to land.

5. While the newspaper is also a "periodical" genre in that it appears in scheduled periodic intervals, here I use the genre term "periodical" to refer to the miscellaneous, essayistic texts that began to appear in the 1690s and early 1700s. These works provided some news but did not privilege foreign news reports like the newspapers; instead, their function was to comment on news and other aspects of contemporary society.

6. The *Athenian Mercury*, the *Tatler,* and the *Spectator* all employed the same medium and format as the *London Gazette*—a single folio half-sheet printed in two columns on both sides (the format of the *Review* varied but also sometimes employed this standard). The *Gazette* also

provided content for the era's periodicals, as they often reprinted from the paper, provided updates on its news, or responded to its stories.

7. *Athenian Mercury* 1, no. 14, May 9, 1691 (hereafter cited as *AM*); *Spectator* No. 582, Aug. 18, 1714, IV:591. Because copies of the *Mercury* survive in different formats and with varying pagination, I provide the volume and issue numbers, along with the date of the issue, for easiest reference. The issues of the *Mercury* cited here were accessed via the ProQuest British Periodicals database, which lists the publication as the *Athenian Gazette*. For the *Spectator*, volume and page numbers refer to Donald F. Bond's five-volume edition of the *Spectator* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965). For all periodicals cited in this volume, I have silently changed old-style dates to new style.

8. Daniel Defoe, *The Storm* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 3. Italics converted to roman type.

9. Manushag Powell notes that from the eighteenth century on, "Periodicals have a tendency toward self-reflexivity that seems to surpass that of other genres." Clifford Siskin has argued that this "transformation of reader into writer" was a fundamental aspect of how writing induced disciplinarity and generic differentiation in the eighteenth century. Michael Warner has also highlighted the self-reflexivity of early periodicals, arguing that publications like the *Athenian Mercury* and the *Spectator* included "feedback loops" in order to demonstrate the existence of the public they claimed to be addressing. Manushag Powell, "Afterword: We Other Periodicalists, Or, Why Periodical Studies?," *TSWL* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 447; Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1810* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 4, 160–68; Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 11–12, 99–100.

10. Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 8–9.

11. Robert Adams Day, *Told in Letters: Epistolary Fiction Before Richardson* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1966), 50, emphasis in original. While Day focuses on the development of epistolary fiction, he also notes "how completely the image of the familiar letter dominated the literary modes of the age" (48).

12. Howard Robinson, *The British Post Office: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1948), 71–73.

13. Ibid., 65.

14. G. A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, 1700–1760* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 17–22.

15. Raven, *The Business of Books*, 117.

16. Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 14.

17. Raven, *The Business of Books*, 84.

18. See, for example, Lennard Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); William B. Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684–1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990).

19. Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, "The Rise of Periodical Studies," *PMLA* 121, no. 2 (March 2006): 520–21.

20. Manushag Powell, "See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil: Spectation and the Eighteenth-Century Public Sphere," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 45, no. 2 (Winter 2012): 256.

21. Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture*, 9.

22. Important exceptions include Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture*, and Gary Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early*

*Modern England, 1500–1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), each of which emphasizes the interrelation of manuscript epistolary practices and printed letters.

23. This is true even of the *Spectator*, where the prominence of letters has long been acknowledged but under-theorized. Apart from Richmond P. Bond's introduction to his *New Letters to the "Tatler" and "Spectator"* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1959) and Eve Tavor Bannet's essay "'Epistolary Commerce' in *The Spectator*" in the collected volume *"The Spectator": Emerging Discourses*, ed. Donald J. Newman (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), I am unaware of any extensive considerations of the periodical's letters. Powell has analyzed the epistolary *Rambler* essays but argues that they diverge from earlier epistolary periodicals in that Johnson wrote almost all of the letters himself and did not solicit reader correspondence. Manushag Powell, "Johnson and His 'Readers' in the Epistolary Rambler Essays," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 44, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 572, 577.

24. Hunter, *Before Novels*, 186.

25. Davis, *Factual Fictions*, 58.

26. See, for example, Kathryn Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture: The Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (London: Routledge, 1989), 4; Manushag Powell, *Performing Authorship in 18th-Century English Periodicals* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2012), 35.

27. John Dunton, *The Life and Errors of John Dunton Late Citizen of London* (London, 1705), 100.

28. Sarah Dunton to John Dunton, 12 July 1699, MS. Rawl. D. 72, fol. 71, Rawlinson Manuscripts, The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford.

29. Sarah Dunton to John Dunton, 26 February 1701, MS. Rawl. D. 72, fol. 73, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

30. JW to John Dunton, 5 November 1710, MS. Rawl. D. 72$^{v}$, fol. 119, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford. The acquaintance was likely Elizabeth Singer Rowe, who early in her career published poetry in the *Athenian Mercury*.

31. John Dunton, *The Case of John Dunton, Citizen of London* (London, 1700), 4.

32. James Tierney points out that Sir Roger L'Estrange's periodical the *Observator: In Question and Answer* (1681–83) was the first to use the Q&A format. But the paper worked as a kind of catechism, using only the form, not the function, of letters; it did not solicit reader letters or present itself as an actual collection. James Tierney, "Periodicals and the Trade, 1695–1780," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. Michael F. Suarez SJ and Michael L. Turner, vol. 5, *1695–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 481.

33. Helen Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late-Stuart England* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 19.

34. *AM* 2, no. 18, July 25, 1691, italics in original.

35. Jody Greene, *The Trouble with Ownership: Literary Property and Authorial Liability in England, 1660–1730* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 4–8, 127; Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 37.

36. Dunton, *Life and Errors*, 257. Hunter has highlighted Dunton's obsession with novelty, reflected in his exaggerated claims of originality in the "Question-Project." His "pursuit of novelty for its own sake" is representative, Hunter argues, of "a whole sprawling context of attention to the new, strange, and surprising" that was a necessary precursor to the emergence of the novel. J. Paul Hunter, "The Insistent I," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1979): 20; Hunter, *Before Novels*, 103, 14.

37. *AM* 1, no. 1, March 17, 1691.

38. Dunton, *Life and Errors*, 248–49.

39. "The Preface to the First Volume," *AM* 1, no. 1, March 17, 1691.

40. Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture*, 79.

41. Lawrence Klein, "Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytic Procedure," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 97–109; Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

42. *AM* 2, no. 1, May 26, 1691.

43. Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture*, 4, 14–15.

44. *AM* 1, no. 13, May 5, 1691.

45. *AM* 3, no. 13, Sept. 8, 1691.

46. *AM* 9, no. 15, Jan. 31, 1693.

47. "The Preface to the First Volume," *AM* 1, no. 1, March 17, 1691.

48. *AM* 1, no. 4, April 4, 1691.

49. *AM* 1, no. 1, March 17, 1691.

50. *AM* 1, no. 3, March 31, 1691.

51. "The Preface to the Second Volume," *AM* 2, no. 1, May 26, 1691.

52. *AM* 4, no. 1, Sept. 29, 1691.

53. Dunton, *Life and Errors*, 256.

54. *AM* 1, no. 1, March 17, 1691. According to Dunton's agreement with Sault and Wesley, the collaborators were responsible for the prefaces affixed to the collected volumes. Memorandum, November 1702, MS Rawl D. 72, fol. 121, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

55. *AM* 9, no. 1, Dec. 13, 1692.

56. *AM* 2, no. 17, July 21, 1691.

57. Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture*, 79.

58. *AM* 2, no. 17, July 21, 1691.

59. Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late-Stuart England*, 39–40.

60. John Dunton to Mr. Larkin, March 1709, MS. Rawl. D. 72, fol. 69$^{v}$, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

61. *AM* 9, no. 15, Jan. 31, 1693; *AM* 18, no. 13, Aug. 27, 1695.

62. *AM* 8, no. 1, July 12, 1692.

63. JW to John Dunton, 5 November 1710, MS. Rawl. D. 72, fol. 119$^{r-v}$, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

64. In the immediate aftermath of the lapse of the Licensing Act, the first London daily, the *Daily Courant*, appeared, and a number of new papers emerged that mixed aspects of handwritten and printed news sources: London tri-weeklies the *Post Man*, the *Post Boy*, and the *Flying Post* all provided blank space for correspondents to write personal notes when sending papers into the country, or for the printers to add updated information that had arrived since printing. Ichabod Dawks's *News-Letter* also used a special type font that was intended to resemble handwriting and began each issue with a large, flourishing "Sir." John Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 47; Charles Clark, *The Public Prints: The Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1665–1740* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 22–23, 44.

65. The personal and literary relationship between Dunton and Defoe has been acknowledged but misunderstood. Paula Backscheider consistently calls Dunton and Defoe "friends" despite their later quarrel and highlights Defoe's dissenting education at Newington Green where a key pedagogical influence was Samuel Annesley, later Dunton's father-in-law. But Maximillian Novak, while noting the ongoing literary interaction, questions "whether Defoe ever actually worked with Dunton or was a close friend," since Dunton's business reputation was already declining at the end of the seventeenth century. Paula Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 18–20 and passim; Maximillian E. Novak, *Daniel Defoe, Master of Fictions: His Life and Ideas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 110.

66. Dunton, *Life and Errors*, 239–40, 257; John Dunton, *Dunton's Whipping-Post: Or, A Satyr upon Every Body* (London, 1706), 88.

67. Dunton, *Dunton's Whipping-Post*, 89.

68. Thomas Brown and William Pate started the *London*, later *Lacedemonian*, *Mercury* in February 1692 as both a satire of and a competitor to the *Athenian Mercury*, criticizing Dunton's claim to have "an uncontrovertible Patent for answering all Queries exclusive of all men else." Other periodicals, including the *Jovial Mercury* (1693), the *Ladies Mercury* (1693), and the *British Apollo* (1708–11), also used the question-and-answer device. Stephen Parks, *John Dunton and the English Book Trade: A Study of His Career with a Checklist of His Publications* (New York: Garland, 1976), 94–97; Tierney, "Periodicals and the Trade, 1695–1780," 481.

69. Novak, *Daniel Defoe, Master of Fictions*, 186.

70. Richard Hamblyn, "Introduction," in *The Storm* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), x.

71. Defoe, *The Storm*, 36.

72. The *Gazette* was still the official paper of record, printed "by authority," while the *Courant* had become the country's first daily paper just 18 months earlier, when it began publishing in March 1702.

73. Quoted in Hamblyn, "Introduction," xxiii.

74. Defoe, *The Storm*, 8.

75. While Defoe remained interested in the periodical marketplace in *A Review of the State of the English Nation*, he spent less space explicitly critiquing other newspapers in this second iteration of the *Review*. I focus here on *A Review of the Affairs of France*, which ran from 1704 to 1705.

76. Daniel Defoe, *A Review of the Affairs of France* no. 1, Feb. 19, 1704, I:8 (hereafter cited as *R*). Volume and page numbers refer to John McVeagh's nine-volume edition of the *Review* (Pickering and Chatto: 2003).

77. J. A. Downie, "Stating Facts Right about Defoe's Review," in *Telling People What to Think: Early Eighteenth-Century Periodicals from the "Review" to the "Rambler*," ed. J. A. Downie and Thomas N. Corns (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 13.

78. Maximillian E. Novak, "Defoe's Political and Religious Journalism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 26.

79. Novak, *Daniel Defoe, Master of Fictions*, 186.

80. *R*, "The Preface," I:4, italics converted to roman type.

81. The "Mercure Scandale" section was short lived, showing again how letters helped to initiate a new genre. In late 1704, Defoe printed reader letters in five supplements to the *Review*, then separated correspondence into 23 issues of the *Little Review*, before retiring the section in late 1705. Nicholas Seager, "'He reviews without Fear, and acts without fainting': Defoe's *Review*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46, no. 1 (Fall 2012): 131–142, 134.

82. *R* no. 1, Feb. 19, 1704, I:8.

83. *R* no. 1, Feb. 19, 1704, I:8–9.

84. *R* no. 5, March 18, 1704, I:38–39.

85. *R* no. 25, May 30, 1704, I:161.

86. *R* no. 18, May 6, 1704, I:117.

87. Defoe, *The Storm*, 157.

88. Ibid., 8.

89. Ibid., 3–4.

90. Ibid., 4.

91. Ibid., 131, italics converted to roman type.

92. Ibid., 131–32.

93. Paula McDowell, "Defoe and the Contagion of the Oral: Modeling Media Shift in 'A Journal of the Plague Year,'" *PMLA* 121, no. 1 (January 2006): 89.

94. *R* no. 9, April 4, 1704, I:60.

95. *R* no. 35, July 4, 1704, I:220.

96. *R*, "The Preface," I:1, italics converted to roman type.

97. Ian Watt cites the Victorian attitude, exemplified by William Minto in 1887, that Defoe was "a great, a truly great liar, perhaps the greatest that ever lived." Watt argues that Defoe's use of plain language and inclusion of everyday details laid the groundwork for the novel's "literary realism." Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 93, 101–2.

98. *R* no. 9, April 4, 1704, I:60.

99. Novak, *Daniel Defoe, Master of Fictions*, 226.

100. Novak, "Defoe's Political and Religious Journalism," 38.

101. *R* no. 38, July 15, 1704, I:241.

102. *R* no. 41, July 25, 1704, I:262.

103. Defoe continued to write the *Review* three times a week even while living in Scotland.

104. Novak, *Daniel Defoe, Master of Fictions*, 197.

105. Daniel Defoe to Robert Harley, 9 November 1703, Add MS 70291, fol. 5., Portland Papers Vol. CCXCI, The British Library, London.

106. Daniel Defoe to Robert Harley, 1704, Add MS 70291, fol. 17, British Lib., London.

107. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life*, 152.

108. Daniel Defoe to Robert Harley, 11 September 1707, Add MS 70291, fol. 192, British Lib., London.

109. Ibid.

110. Defoe, *The Storm*, 3.

111. Ibid., 64.

112. Ibid., 8.

113. Ibid., 53.

114. Daniel Defoe, *Roxana: The Fortunate Mistress* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 277.

115. Powell, *Performing Authorship in 18th-Century English Periodicals*, 3–7.

116. See, for example, Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991); Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism* (New York: Verso, 1984).

117. See, for example, Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture*, and Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56–80. Warner points out that this confusion arises from the *Spectator*'s assumptions that its readership, a segment of the world, is *the* public—a move that many critics have reproduced. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 106.

118. *Spectator* no. 428, July 11, 1712, IV:5–6 (hereafter cited as *S*). Volume and page numbers refer to Donald F. Bond's five-volume edition of the *Spectator* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

119. *The Englishman* no. 16, Nov. 10, 1713, 1.

120. *Tatler* no. 1, April 12, 1709, I:16 (hereafter cited as *T*). Volume and page numbers refer to Donald F. Bond's three-volume edition of the *Tatler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

121. *S* no. 1, March 1, 1711, I:5.

122. Donald F. Bond also points out that the *Spectator* was printed by Sam Buckley, the editor of the *Daily Courant*, and sold by Abigail Baldwin, widow of the *Post-Man* proprietor Richard Baldwin, "so that the new paper might almost seem to its readers a literary supplement to the old-established newspaper." Donald F. Bond, "Introduction," in *The Spectator*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), xxi–xxii.

123. *T* no. 1, April 12, 1709, I:15–16.

124. *T* no. 64, Sept. 6, 1709, I:446.

125. Joseph Addison to Richard Steele, 5 March 1710, MS.2008.016, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, Los Angeles.

126. Jared Gardner has focused on the key role of the "editorial function," as opposed to the authorial function, in early American magazines, arguing that the "careful guidance of the editor" created a "collaborative and interactive . . . periodical space" that "worked to collapse the distance between author and reader." Gardner, however, focuses on the political valence of this stance, seeing the heterogeneous magazine as an embodiment of federalist values. Jared Gardner, *The Rise and Fall of Early American Magazine Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 103, 74–75.

127. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 99.

128. *S* no. 1, March 1, 1711, I:5.

129. *S* no. 442, July 28, 1712, IV:52.

130. *S* no. 78, May 30, 1711, I:334.

131. *S* no. 271, Jan. 10, 1712, III:76.

132. *S* no. 240, Dec. 5, 1711, II:208.

133. *S* no. 555, Dec. 17, 1712, IV:494.

134. *T* no. 7, April 26, 1709, I:63; *S* no. 1, March 1, 1711, I:7.

135. Letters to Richard Steele, after 27 October 1709, after 4 March 1710, no date, Add MS 61687, fols. 26, 96, 171, Correspondence and Papers of Sir Richard Steele, British Lib., London.

136. "To the Author of the Tatler," August 1709, Add MS 61687, fol. 1, British Lib.

137. Letter to Richard Steele as Mr. Spectator, no date, Add MS 61687 fol. 159, British Lib.

138. Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and English Diurnal Form, 1660–1785* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 114.

139. William Kinsley, "Meaning and Format: Mr. Spectator and His Folio Half-Sheets," *ELH* 34, no. 4 (December 1967): 483–84.

140. *S* no. 22, March 26, 1711, I:92; *S* no. 184, Oct. 1, 1711, II:224.

141. *S* no. 353, April 15, 1712, III:316.

142. *S* no. 555, Dec. 17, 1712, IV:492.

143. *S* no. 542, Nov. 21, 1712, IV:438–39.

144. *S* no. 418, June 30, 1712, III:570.

145. *S* no. 555, Dec. 17, 1712, IV:491.

146. *S* no. 1, March 1, 1711, I:6.

147. *S* no. 124, July 23, 1711, II:154–55.

148. *S* no. 367, May 1, 1712, III:380.

149. See "Introduction," this volume, n. 7.

150. Rose, *Authors and Owners*, 15, 3, 37.

## *Chapter 3 • Open Letters*

1. Dorothea Dubois, *The Lady's Polite Secretary, or New Female Letter Writer* (London, 1771), iii.

2. Charles Allen, *The Polite Lady: Or, A Course of Female Education* (London, 1760), 149.

3. Eve Tavor Bannet, *Empire of Letters: Letter Manuals and Transatlantic Correspondence, 1688–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), xiii–xvi.

4. Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 18.

5. Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 153, 175.

6. Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, vol. 2 (London, 1783), 297.

7. *Clarissa* has served as a centerpiece for scholarly discussions of the rise of the novel. Critics from Ian Watt to Terry Eagleton and Michael McKeon have emphasized its role as the novel of the bourgeoisie, pitting individual virtue against both aristocratic libertinism and the upstart nouveau riche. *Clarissa* has been seen as inaugurating a tradition of sentimental epistolary literature that associated the novel with the investigation of an individual women's interiority; as Deidre Shauna Lynch writes, "We have inherited a view of the eighteenth-century epistolary novel as a form precociously capable of delivering psychological verisimilitude." In addition, as feminist critics sought to recover and elevate a tradition of women's writing, some reinforced a seemingly intrinsic connection between women and letters. Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 26; Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 42–43.

8. For discussions of the popular linking of women and novel reading, see, for example, Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750–1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Joe Bray, *The Female Reader in the English Novel: From Burney to Austen* (New York: Routledge, 2009); April Alliston, "Female Quixotism and the Novel: Character and Plausibility, Honesty and Fidelity," *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 52, no. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2011): 249–69.

9. Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters, and the Novel* (New York: AMS Press, 1980), 132.

10. Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa, Or, The History of a Young Lady* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1985), 7:515, 1437. Citations including volume and letter numbers correspond to the first edition of the novel, and also include page numbers from Angus Ross's Penguin Classics 1985 edition, which reproduces the first edition.

11. Richardson and his readers would have been well aware of the possibility for this type of response following the intense controversy surrounding *Pamela*. In the first year after *Pamela*'s publication, at least 16 works directly using the title appeared, including *Shamela*, *Anti-Pamela*, *The True Anti-Pamela*, *Pamela's Conduct in High Life*, *Pamela in High Life*, *The Life of Pamela*, *Pamela Censured, Pamela Versified*, *Memoirs of the Life of Lady H———, The Celebrated Pamela*, *Pamela. A Comedy*, *Pamela: or, Virtue Triumphant*, and *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded. An Opera*. Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, *Pamela in the Marketplace: Literary Controversy and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2–3.

12. Susan Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers, 1660–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 165.

13. As Watt writes, "Letters are the most direct material evidence for the inner life of their writers that exist. . . . The letter form . . . offered Richardson a short-cut, as it were, to the heart." William Warner argues that the letter form represents a "nostalgic temporal regression in media" within the print public sphere: "Richardson's use of the familiar letter engages a rhetoric of radical sincerity—transparent communication from heart to heart, with nothing held in reserve, nothing disguised." Christina Marsden Gillis, however, writes that Richardson used the letter not for its privacy but for its "peculiar ambiguity between private and public" and argues for "the ultimate open-ness, and public-ness, or Richardson's great epistolary work." Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 191, 196; William Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684–1750* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 207; Christina Marsden Gillis, *The Paradox of Privacy: Epistolary Form in Clarissa* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1984), 2, 4.

14. Elizabeth Heckendorn Cook, *Epistolary Bodies: Gender and Genre in the Eighteenth-Century Republic of Letters* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 16.

15. Richardson, *Clarissa*, 4:183, 588.

16. Recent studies have highlighted the material conditions of the period's diplomatic corps. Beginning in the Elizabethan period, humanist scholars emphasized literacy, and in particular letter writing, as essential skills for government work. John Brewer has argued that the eighteenth century in Britain saw the rise of a modern fiscal-military state marked by a professional bureaucracy without the high levels of corruption present in European courts, while Jeremy Black adds that Britain's emergence as the major world power over the eighteenth century entailed an overall regulation of the diplomatic corps, which grew both in number and in political power. Rayne Allinson, *A Monarchy of Letters: Royal Correspondence and English Diplomacy in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 5; John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 57–63; Jeremy Black, *British Diplomats and Diplomacy, 1688–1800* (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2001), 10.

17. Jennifer Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy: Britain in Europe, c. 1750–1830* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2010), 22.

18. Ibid., 33.

19. Ibid., 131.

20. Thomas Grenville to George Grenville, 28 February 1743, George Grenville, Correspondence, Mss Vol. 125, v. 1, Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University, Farmington, CT.

21. George Grenville to Thomas Grenville, 10 October 1745, Mss Vol. 125, v. 1, Lewis Walpole Lib., Yale University.

22. William Pitt to Richard Grenville-Temple, October 1754, Mss Vol. 125, v. 2, Lewis Walpole Lib., Yale University.

23. Hester (Grenville) Pitt and William Pitt to Richard Grenville-Temple, November 1755, Mss Vol. 125, v. 2, Lewis Walpole Lib., Yale University.

24. Richard Grenville-Temple to John Wilkes, 18 November 1762, Mss Vol. 125, v. 5, Lewis Walpole Lib., Yale University.

25. Bannet, *Empire of Letters*, xiii–xvi.

26. *Polite Epistolary Correspondence* (London, 1748), v–vi.

27. John Tavernier, *The Entertaining Correspondent* (Berwick, 1759), 4.

28. *The Preceptor: Containing a General Course of Education* (London, 1758), xviii.

29. John Stuart, Earl of Bute, to George Grenville, 22 May 1762, Mss Vol. 125, v. 5, Lewis Walpole Lib., Yale University.

30. Richard Grenville-Temple to John Wilkes, 21 November 1762, Mss Vol. 125, v. 5, Lewis Walpole Lib., Yale University.

31. Elizabeth Grenville to George Grenville, 23 December 1755, Mss Vol. 125, v. 2, Lewis Walpole Lib., Yale University.

32. Black, *British Diplomats and Diplomacy, 1688–1800*, 134.

33. Richard Grenville-Temple to John Wilkes, 17 October 1762, Mss Vol. 125, v. 5, Lewis Walpole Lib., Yale University.

34. Richard Grenville-Temple to John Wilkes, 21 October 1762, 28 November 1762, Mss Vol. 125, v. 5, Lewis Walpole Lib., Yale University.

35. Janet Todd defines sensibility as "the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering . . . an innate sensitiveness or susceptibility revealing itself in a variety of spontaneous activities such as crying, swooning and kneeling." Todd locates the discourse of sensibility primarily in British fiction of the 1740s to 1770s. Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986), 7, 9. Epistolary novels, Susan Whyman notes, were particularly associated with sensibility: "The cult of sensibility was bound up with the sentimental novel." Whyman, *The Pen and the People*, 215.

36. Charles Jenkinson to George Grenville, 7 July 1759, 17 July 1759, Mss Vol. 125, v. 3, Lewis Walpole Lib., Yale University.

37. Jane Johnson to Mrs. Brompton, 17 October 1749, Correspondence and Papers of Jane Johnson, MS. Don. C. 190, fol. 12, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

38. Whyman, *The Pen and the People*, 176.

39. Jane Johnson to Robert Johnson, 15 November 1753, MS. Don. C. 190, fols. 7–8, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

40. Jane Johnson to Mrs. Garth, 3 June 1742, MS. Don. C. 190, fol. 19, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

41. Jane Johnson to Mrs. Garth, 3 June 1742, MS. Don. C. 190, fol. 19, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

42. Jane Johnson to Mrs. Brompton, 17 October 1749, MS. Don. C. 190, fols. 11–12, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

43. Jane Johnson to Henrietta Ingram, 5 August 1755, MS. Don. C. 190, fol. 24, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

44. Jane Johnson to Henrietta Ingram, 5 August 1755, MS. Don. C. 190, fols. 23–24, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

45. Jane Johnson to Mrs. Brompton, 17 October 1749, MS. Don. C. 190, fol. 11, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

46. Jane Johnson, "A Conversation between Stella & Her Guardian Angel, One Star Light Night, in the Garden at ————," 1747, MS. Don. C. 190, fol. 26, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

47. Jane Johnson to Barbara Johnson, 1 May 1747, MS. Don. C. 190, fol. 1, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

48. Susan Whyman, "Letter Writing and the Rise of the Novel: The Epistolary Literacy of Jane Johnson and Samuel Richardson," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70, no. 4 (December 2007): 585.

49. Whyman, *The Pen and the People*, 188.

50. Howard Robinson, *The British Post Office: A History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1948), 94; Kenneth Ellis, *The Post Office in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Administrative History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 7.

51. Robinson, *The British Post Office: A History*, 109–11.

52. For discussion of the creation of masculine and feminine spheres, see, for example, Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Thomas Walter Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990). Amanda Vickery has challenged the chronology of separate spheres, arguing both that men's and women's work was more separate in the early modern period than the "separate spheres" theory implies, and that women continued to have some level of economic and political participation into the Victorian period. Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History," *Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (June 1993): 400–13. But Vickery acknowledges that, from the mid-eighteenth century on, there was a greater discursive emphasis on the separation of the genders. Her argument supports my own in pointing out the split between a prescriptive view of separate spheres of men and women's writing, and the descriptive reality of continued overlap and interaction.

53. Richardson, *Clarissa*, 7:529, 1467.

54. Ibid., 1:8, 65.

55. Ibid., 7:486, 1368.

56. See, for example, the contrast Juliet McMaster draws between Clarissa's "personal legibility" in which her body is a "clear and lucid text" and Lovelace's conscious manipulation of

body language using actorly principles. Warner meanwhile argues that the use of the letter privileges a manuscript ideal, as "the familiar letter engages a rhetoric of radical sincerity—transparent communication from heart to heart, with nothing held in reserve, nothing disguised." Juliet McMaster, "Reading the Body in Clarissa," in *Clarissa and Her Readers: New Essays for the Clarissa Project*, ed. Carol Houlihan Flynn and Edward Copeland (New York: AMS Press, 1999), 198–99; Warner, *Licensing Entertainment*, 207.

57. William M. Sale, *Samuel Richardson: Master Printer* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950), 229–50.

58. Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality, and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 22.

59. Gillis, *The Paradox of Privacy*, 82–83

60. Richardson, *Clarissa*, 7:497, 1385.

61. Ibid., 7:530, 1473.

62. Ibid., 1:35.

63. Ibid., 1:9, 66.

64. Ibid., 1:10, 67.

65. Ibid., 1:37, 174.

66. Ibid., 1:10–11, 71–2.

67. Ibid., 1:1, 39–40.

68. Ibid., 1:2, 41.

69. Ibid., 1:12, 74–5.

70. Hina Nazar, "Judging Clarissa's Heart," *ELH* 79, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 93.

71. Samuel Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 336–37. Richardson began reviewing and arranging his correspondence in 1755 and considered an offer for a German edition in 1757. Lady Bradshaigh also edited her half of the letters on the assumption that they would be published after Richardson's death. After his daughter's death in 1803, the letters were sold to Richard Phillips and edited by Anna Letitia Barbauld, who preserved the indexing system by which Richardson had arranged them. John Carroll, "Introduction," in *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 3–9.

72. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 77.

73. Richardson, *Clarissa*, 6:372, 1152.

74. Ibid., 6:379, 1163.

75. Ibid., 6:324, 1035.

76. Ibid., 7:515, 1437–38.

77. Leah Price, *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel: From Richardson to George Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 24.

78. Richardson, *Clarissa*, 7: 1495.

79. Ibid., 1:17, 101.

80. Ibid., 2:69, 282.

81. Ibid., 2:78, 310.

82. Ibid., 7:1499.

83. Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982), 124.

84. Richardson, *Clarissa*, 5:257, 882.

85. Samuel Richardson, *Letters and Passages Restored from the Original Manuscripts of the History of Clarissa*, ed. Thomas Keymer and O. M. Brack (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998), 109.

86. For example, John Carroll, editor of *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, writes that Richardson "undoubtedly" found this false etymology for "correspondence" "more satisfactory

than the true one," and Watt argues for Richardson's alignment with Lovelace here, writing that Richardson "supported his belief with a revelatory, though erroneous, etymology." Carroll, "Introduction," in *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 31; Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, 191.

87. Richardson, *Clarissa*, 5:261, 890.

88. Ibid., 4:229, 743.

89. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 86.

90. Ibid., 59.

91. Thomas Keymer, *Richardson's Clarissa and the Eighteenth-Century Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 68.

92. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 100.

93. Ibid., 242.

94. Glen M. Johnson, "Richardson's 'Editor' in *Clarissa*," *Journal of Narrative Technique* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 99–100.

95. Jared Gardner has highlighted the magazine as a key influence on the early American novel to argue that periodicals' epistolary interface with readers presented a useful model for novelists, "one predicated not on the authorial but on the editorial function and the careful arrangement of fragments and data." As I show here, this dynamic was at work more than 50 years earlier as Richardson attempted to assume the stance of a periodical editor in his imaginative work. Jared Gardner, *The Rise and Fall of Early American Magazine Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 74.

96. Richardson, *Clarissa*, 1:33–34.

97. Ibid., 7:1495, 1489.

98. Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 3.

99. Keymer, *Richardson's "Clarissa" and the Eighteenth-Century Reader*, 58, xviii.

100. Ibid., 34.

101. Gillis, *The Paradox of Privacy*, 96.

102. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 296.

103. Ibid., 315.

104. Warner, *Licensing Entertainment*, 201. A "media event" is one that is initiated by a media production and then proliferates through responses to that production, such as the sustained process of critique and defense that both *Pamela* and *Clarissa* provoked. Ibid., 178, 182.

105. For discussion of *Clarissa* as a bedrock of sentimental fiction, see Robert A. Erickson, *The Language of the Heart, 1600–1750* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); Christine Roulston, *Virtue, Gender, and the Authentic Self in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Richardson, Rousseau, and Laclos* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998); Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction*.

106. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 84.

107. Richardson, *Clarissa*, 7:1495.

108. Terry Castle, *Clarissa's Ciphers: Meaning and Disruption in Richardson's "Clarissa"* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 175, 178.

109. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 63.

110. Louise Curran, *Samuel Richardson and the Art of Letter-Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 96, 116; Peter Sabor, "Rewriting *Clarissa*: Alternative Endings by Lady Echlin, Lady Bradshaigh, and Samuel Richardson," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 29, no. 2 (Winter 2016): 138–42.

111. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 306, 245.

112. Curran, *Samuel Richardson and the Art of Letter-Writing*, 115.

113. Erickson, *The Language of the Heart, 1600–1750*, 193.

114. Keymer, *Richardson's "Clarissa" and the Eighteenth-Century Reader*, 65. In 1749, Rich-

ardson wrote to Solomon Lowe, defending Clarissa's rejection of Lovelace, "Permit me, Sir, to refer you to Colonel Morden's Letter to Clarissa, at the latter End of Vol. III where you will find Warnings given to the Sex of what sort of Husbands they may expect Rakes and Libertines will probably make them." Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 124.

115. Curran, *Samuel Richardson and the Art of Letter-Writing*, 117.

116. David Brewer, *The Afterlife of Character, 1726–1825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 121–22.

117. Samuel Richardson, *The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence*, ed. William C. Slattery (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), 6.

118. Two days earlier, he likewise wrote to Lady Bradshaigh, "You and others having seen but Part of my Work; by Reason of the distant Publication of two Volumes, and two Volumes, have formed from the Four a Catastrophe of your own; and are therefore the more unwilling to part with it, in favour of that which I think from the Premises the only natural one." Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 103, 117.

119. Samuel Richardson, *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, vol. 2 (New York: AMS Press, 1986), 61.

120. Ibid., 5.

121. Ibid., 27.

122. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 85.

123. Ibid., 289.

124. Ibid., 225.

125. Curran, *Samuel Richardson and the Art of Letter-Writing*, 116.

126. Richardson, *The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence*, 30.

127. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 65–66.

128. Ibid., 289.

129. Keymer, *Richardson's "Clarissa" and the Eighteenth-Century Reader*, 29.

130. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 126, 127, 197, 143.

131. Henry Fielding, *The Correspondence of Henry and Sarah Fielding*, ed. Martin C. Battestin and Clive T. Probyn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 70–71.

132. Allen Michie, *Richardson and Fielding: The Dynamics of a Critical Rivalry* (London: Associated University Presses, 1999), 39.

133. Ibid., 13, 66.

134. Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, 65.

135. Ibid., 127, 89.

136. Dena Goodman, *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 142.

137. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 19.

138. Ibid., 20.

139. James Raven, "Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age," in *The English Novel 1770–1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, ed. Peter Garside, James Raven, and Rainer Showerling, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 30–32.

## *Chapter 4 · A New World*

1. Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, ed. John H. Middendorf, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. 22 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 956, 1019; ibid., vol. 23:1461–62.

2. Ibid., vol. 23:1173–74.

3. James Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill and L. F. Powell, vol. 5 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 312.

4. James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill and L. F. Powell, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), n. pag.

5. Boswell to William Bowles, 27 February 1786; James Boswell, *The Correspondence and Other Papers of James Boswell Relating to the Making of the Life of Johnson*, ed. Marshall Waingrow (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), 137.

6. Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, 2010, 23:1174.

7. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:30.

8. Ibid., 1:29.

9. Ibid.

10. Alvin Kernan, *Printing Technology, Letters and Samuel Johnson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 20. Similarly, Mark E. Wildermuth argues that Johnson had a complex relationship to print: he "addresses the question of the reliability of representation in a media culture within the context of textual instability . . . [and] provides a complete explanation of how signs can stabilize categories of truth and virtue despite the problematic nature of print culture." Mark E. Wildermuth, *Print, Chaos, and Complexity: Samuel Johnson and Eighteenth-Century Media Culture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 20.

11. Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, ed. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. 3 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 321.

12. Ibid., 3:323.

13. Paula McDowell has tracked this conceptual separation between media and back-formation of oral and manuscript "cultures" in other aspects of eighteenth-century writing, showing how "media forms that are in reality copresent and interdependent are modeled as in some sense competing with each other." Paula McDowell, "Defoe and the Contagion of the Oral: Modeling Media Shift in 'A Journal of the Plague Year,'" *PMLA* 121, no. 1 (January 2006): 104. See also Paula McDowell, "'The Art of Printing Was Fatal': Print Commerce and the Idea of Oral Tradition in Long Eighteenth-Century Ballad Discourse," in *Ballads and Broadsides in Britain, 1500–1800*, ed. Patricia Fumerton, Anita Guerrini, and Kris McAbee (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2010), 35–56.

14. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 2:383.

15. Ibid.

16. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:4.

17. See J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990); Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

18. Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman, "John Foxe, John Day and the Printing of the 'Book of Martyrs,'" in *Lives in Print: Biography and the Book Trade from the Middle Ages to the 21st Century*, ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 23.

19. Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker, "Introducing Lives," in *Writing Lives: Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

20. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote, "Introduction," in *Lives in Print: Biography and the Book Trade from the Middle Ages to the 21st Century* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2002), vii.

21. Donald A. Stauffer, *The Art of Biography in Eighteenth Century England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1941), 456.

22. Mark Phillips, *Society and Sentiment: Genres of Historical Writing in Britain, 1740–1820* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 103, 134, and passim.

23. Paulina Kewes, "Shakespeare's Lives in Print, 1662–1821," in *Lives in Print: Biography*

*and the Book Trade from the Middle Ages to the 21st Century*, ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2002), 64.

24. Deidre Shauna Lynch, *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 44.

25. Kewes, "Shakespeare's Lives in Print, 1662–1821," 55; Harold Love, "Gossip and Biography," in *Writing Lives: Biography and Textuality, Identity and Representation in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 99.

26. Joan Evans, *A History of the Society of Antiquaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 36, 105.

27. Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), xiii–xiv, xvi.

28. Arnaldo Momigliano, "Eighteenth-Century Prelude to Mr. Gibbon," in *Sesto Contributo Alla Storia Degli Studi Classici E Del Mondo Antico*, vol. 1 (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1980), 250–51.

29. Kate Bennett, "Textual Introduction," in *Brief Lives with an Apparatus for the Lives of Our English Mathematical Writers*, ed. Kate Bennett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), cxxxiv, cxxxvi.

30. Elizabeth Yale takes Aubrey as a key case study in her analysis of "sociable knowledge," the way that early modern naturalists and antiquarians relied upon correspondence networks to produce knowledge and also attempted to transfer some of the values of correspondence into the print medium: "The particular affordances of manuscript made possible the characteristic early modern approach to natural and human history, in which new knowledge was continuously accreted through correspondence, conversation, observation, and reading." Elizabeth Yale, *Sociable Knowledge: Natural History and the Nation in Early Modern Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 16, 117–27.

31. Michael Hunter, *John Aubrey and the Realm of Learning* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 63.

32. John Aubrey, "Brief Lives Part I," Aubrey Manuscripts, MS. Aubrey 6, fol. 12, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

33. John Aubrey, "The Life of Mr Thomas Hobbes," Aubrey Manuscripts, MS. Aubrey 9, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

34. Kate Bennett, "General Introduction," in *Brief Lives with an Apparatus for the Lives of Our English Mathematical Writers*, ed. Kate Bennett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), lxxv.

35. John Aubrey to Anthony Wood, 8 September 1680, Wood Correspondence, MS. Wood F39, fol. 347, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

36. Aubrey Manuscripts, MSS. Aubrey 1–4, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

37. John Aubrey, "Naturall Historie of Wiltshire Part I$^{st}$," Aubrey Manuscripts, MS. Aubrey 1, fols. 3, 13, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

38. John Aubrey, "Brief Lives Part III," Aubrey Manuscripts, MS. Aubrey 8, fol. 89, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

39. John Aubrey, "Brief Lives Part I," Aubrey Manuscripts, MS. Aubrey 6, fol. 12, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

40. John Aubrey to Anthony Wood, 1681, Wood Correspondence, MS. Wood F39, fol. 397, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

41. John Aubrey to Anthony Wood, 14 July 1682, Wood Correspondence, MS. Wood F39, fol. 360, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

42. John Aubrey, "Brief Lives Part II," Aubrey Manuscripts, MS. Aubrey 7, fol. 2, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

43. John Aubrey to Anthony Wood, 27 March 1680, Ballard Collection, MS. Ballard 14, fol. 131, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

44. Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 5 May 1761, MS. Eng. lett. c. 6, fols. 1, 3, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

45. John Loveday to Andrew Ducarel, 8 June 1761, MS. Eng. lett. d. 34, fol. 1, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

46. Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 26 Oct. 1765, MS. Eng. lett. d. 34, fol. 2, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

47. Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 12 Nov. 1765, MS. Eng. lett. c. 6, fol. 13; 30 Nov. 1765, Bod. Lib. MS. Eng. lett. c. 6, fol. 15$^{v}$.

48. Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 30 Nov. 1765, MS. Eng. lett. c. 6, fol. 16, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

49. Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 4 Feb. 1766, MS. Eng. lett. d. 34, fol. 4, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

50. Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 11 Jan. 1766, MS. Eng. lett. c. 6, fol. 21, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

51. Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 16 Jan. 1766, MS. Eng. lett. c. 6, fol. 23$^{v}$, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

52. Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 4 Feb. 1766, MS. Eng. lett. d. 34, fol. 4; Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 3 March 1766, MS. Eng. lett. d. 34, fol. 5, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

53. Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 1 March 1766, MS. Eng. lett. c. 6, fol. 35, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

54. Andrew Ducarel to John Loveday, 7 Jan. 1766, MS. Eng. lett. c. 6, fol. 19$^{v}$, Bodleian Lib., University of Oxford.

55. Thomas Birch, *The Life of Henry Prince of Wales, Eldest Son of King James I* (London, 1760), n. pag.

56. Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 214.

57. Donna Landry, "Love Me, Love My Turkey Book: Letters and Turkish Travelogues in Early Modern England," in *Epistolary Histories: Letters, Fiction, Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 54.

58. Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 108.

59. Felicity Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject: Gender and Ideology in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 18.

60. George Burnet, *Some Letters, Containing An Account of What Seemed Most Remarkable in Travelling through Switzerland, Italy, Some Parts of Germany, &c. In the Years 1685. And 1686.*, 3rd ed. (Rotterdam, 1687), 1–2.

61. Burnet was a family acquaintance of the Pierreponts, Montagu's father's family, and as an adolescent she asked for his feedback on her Latin translations, prefacing them with a letter on women's education. Isobel Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 37.

62. Indeed, while Montagu wrote continuously throughout her life, she only rarely and for the most part involuntarily appeared in print. Ibid., 109, 340–42.

63. Teresa Heffernan and Daniel O'Quinn, "Introduction," in *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2013), 13.

64. Robert Halsband, "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu as Letter-Writer," *PMLA* 80, no. 3 (June 1965): 162.

65. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Robert Halsband, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 315.

66. Ibid., 1:343, 368.

67. Ibid., 1:315.

68. Ibid., 1:284, 399.

69. Ibid., 1:341–42.

70. For further consideration of Montagu's use of letters and epistolary genres, see Cynthia J. Lowenthal, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and the Eighteenth-Century Familiar Letter* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994).

71. Montagu was known largely through the lens of her former friend Alexander Pope, who attacked her in print in the 1720s and '30s as "dirty, promiscuous, and vain." Grundy, *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 268, 288.

72. Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 1:292–93.

73. Teresa Heffernan and Daniel O'Quinn, eds., "Monthly Review, May 1763," in *The Turkish Embassy Letters* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2013), 246.

74. Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 1:312.

75. Ibid., 1:291.

76. James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill and L. F. Powell, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 256.

77. Robert Folkenflik, *Samuel Johnson, Biographer* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 25.

78. See, for example, Ibid., 11 n. 2; Martin Maner, "Samuel Johnson, Scepticism, and Biography," *Biography* 12, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 313; John H. Middendorf, "Introduction," in *The Lives of the Poets*, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. 21 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), xxix.

79. Samuel Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, ed. John H. Middendorf, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. 22 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 848.

80. Middendorf, "Introduction," xxxvii; Harriet Kirkley, *A Biographer at Work: Samuel Johnson's Notes for the "Life of Pope"* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2002), 21.

81. Middendorf, "Introduction," xxix.

82. Robert DeMaria Jr., *The Life of Samuel Johnson: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 280.

83. Johnson, *The Rambler*, 1969, 3:319.

84. Ibid., 3:322–23.

85. Ibid., 3:323.

86. Samuel Johnson, *"The Idler" and "The Adventurer,"* ed. John M. Bullitt, W. J. Bate, and L. F. Powell, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. 2 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 262–63.

87. Ibid., 2:264.

88. Ibid., 2:263.

89. Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, 2010, 22:888.

90. Johnson, *"The Idler" and "The Adventurer,"* 1969, 2:312.

91. Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, 2010, 21:1–2.

92. Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, 2010, 22:637. Johnson cites Horace and paraphrases Cicero.

93. Kirkley, *A Biographer at Work*, 14; James Anderson Winn, *A Window in the Bosom: The Letters of Alexander Pope* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), 30–39.

94. Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, 2010, 23:1120.

95. Ibid.; Kirkley, *A Biographer at Work*, 195.

96. Kirkley, *A Biographer at Work*, 195.

97. Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, 2010, 23:1175, 1123.

98. Kirkley, *A Biographer at Work*, 198.

99. Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, 2010, 23:1174.

100. Ibid., 23:1173.

101. Thomas Keymer, *Richardson's "Clarissa" and the Eighteenth-Century Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 15.

102. Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, 2010, 23:1123.

103. Samuel Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, ed. Mary Lascelles, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. 9 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971), 22.

104. Ibid., 9:57.

105. Walter Jackson Bate, *Samuel Johnson* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1978), 470.

106. Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 1971, 9:65.

107. Ibid., 9:112.

108. Thomas M. Curley has shown how Johnson, despite making erroneous claims about the lack of Erse manuscripts or literary tradition, "nonetheless intuit[ed] correctly that Macpherson had imposed on an unsuspecting public a pseudo-Gaelic body of literature mainly of his own making and out of step with bona fide Highland tradition." But Johnson's focus on manuscripts—both his claim that no Erse manuscripts existed and his denial that epic poetry could be transmitted orally—has tended to "blur the ultimate correctness of his verdict against *Ossian*." Thomas M. Curley, *Samuel Johnson, the Ossian Fraud, and the Celtic Revival in Great Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 100–101.

109. Johnson, *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 1971, 9:118.

110. Hugh Blair, "Preface," in *The Poems of Ossian: And Related Works*, ed. Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 5.

111. Jack Lynch, "Samuel Johnson's 'Love of Truth' and Literary Fraud," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 42, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 603; James Macpherson, "Advertisement," in *The Poems of Ossian: And Related Works*, ed. Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 33.

112. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 2:310, emphasis in original.

113. Radner, *Johnson and Boswell*, 93.

114. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 2:46–47, 58.

115. Ibid., 2:60.

116. R. W. Chapman, "Introduction," in *The Letters of Samuel Johnson with Mrs. Thrale's Genuine Letters to Him*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), v.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid., ix.

119. W. K. Wimsatt, "Images of Samuel Johnson," *ELH* 41, no. 3 (Autumn 1974): 362.

120. James Boswell to William Adams, 21 January 1785; Boswell, *The Correspondence and Other Papers*, 42.

121. James Boswell to Thomas Percy, 20 March 1785; Ibid., 76.

122. Quoted in Wimsatt, "Images of Samuel Johnson," 327.

123. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:6–7.

124. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 2:59.

125. DeMaria, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, 262.

126. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:25.

127. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 2:26.

128. Radner, *Johnson and Boswell*, 157.

129. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:31; Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 2:461; Marshall Waingrow, "Introduction," in *The Correspondence and Other Papers of James Boswell Relating to the Making of the Life of Johnson* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), xxiii.

130. Johnson, *The Lives of the Poets*, 2010, 22:637.

131. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 3:183.

132. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 4:67.

133. Ibid., 4:369.

134. Ibid., 4:102.

135. Ibid.; Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:330.

136. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:29–30.

137. Ibid., 1:6.

138. Ibid., 1:375.

139. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 2:461.

140. Ibid., 2:26.

141. Donald Greene, "Do We Need a Biography of Johnson's 'Boswell' Years?," *Modern Language Studies* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1979): 129, 134.

142. Radner, *Johnson and Boswell*, 324.

143. James Boswell to Anna Seward, 21 January 1785; Boswell, *The Correspondence and Other Papers*, 44.

144. Lisa Berglund, "Life," in *Samuel Johnson in Context*, ed. Jack Lynch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 10.

145. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:28.

146. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 4:343, 346.

147. James L. Clifford, *Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale)*, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 264.

148. See Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject*, 122–25.

149. As Felicity Nussbaum writes, "Thrale, associated with the 'namby-pamby rhymes' of children, trifles in gossip in contrast with Boswell's scrupulous pursuit of truth." Ibid., 123.

150. Helen Deutsch, *Loving Dr. Johnson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 4.

151. Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (New York: Garland, 1974), 242–44.

152. Ibid., 44. Boswell immediately saw himself as the target of this critique, writing to Edmond Malone, "P. 44 is *undoubtedly* levelled at me; for, it *describes* what the Jade has often seen me do—but with Dr. Johnson's *approbation*; for he at all times was flattered by my preserving what fell from his mind when shaken by conversation, so there was nothing *like* treachery." James Boswell to Edmond Malone, 31 March 1786; Boswell, *The Correspondence and Other Papers*, 142.

153. Richard Wendorf, *The Elements of Life: Biography and Portrait-Painting in Stuart and Georgian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 198.

154. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:33.

155. Clifford, *Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale)*, 259, 265. Jenny Davidson has explored this criticism in light of the related ethical-aesthetic debates surrounding the inclusion of particular details in novel writing, noting that questions about the propriety of representing real-life vices were entangled with formal questions about language and representation in the period's biographies and novels. Jenny Davidson, "The 'Minute Particular' in Life-Writing and the Novel," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 48, no. 3 (Spring 2015): 278.

156. April London, "Sarah Fielding's Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia: Anecdote and Women's Biographical Histories," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 43 (2014): 140.

157. Deutsch, *Loving Dr. Johnson*, 24.

158. William Maxwell to James Boswell, 4 May 1787; Boswell, *The Correspondence and Other Papers*, 213.

159. James Boswell to Richard Brocklesby, 18 December 1784; James Boswell to Anna Seward, 21 January 1785; Boswell, *The Correspondence and Other Papers*, 30, 44.

160. James Boswell to William Bowles, 14 June 1785; Ibid., 111.

161. Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:38, 260–61, 328.

162. Joseph Cooper Walker to James Boswell, 5 June 1785; William Bowles to James Boswell, 17 August 1785; Boswell, *The Correspondence and Other Papers*, 110, 116.

163. Frank Brady, *James Boswell, The Later Years: 1769–1795* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984), 285.

164. Ibid., 340, 430.

165. James Boswell to William Johnson Temple, 28–30 November 1789; Boswell, *The Correspondence and Other Papers*, 291; Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1934, 1:7.

166. Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 1960, 5:1.

167. Thomas Warton to James Boswell, 5 November 1785; Boswell, *The Correspondence and Other Papers*, 123–24.

168. Richard Greene to James Boswell, 8 July 1787; William Bowles to James Boswell, 14 November 1787; Ibid., 225, 257.

169. James Boswell to William Bowles, 14 November 1787; James Boswell to Sarah Adams, 5 May 1786; Ibid., 258–59, 155.

170. James Boswell to Thomas Percy, 9 February 1788; Ibid., 265.

171. James Boswell to William Johnson Temple, 24–25 February 1788; Ibid., 267.

172. Nussbaum, *The Autobiographical Subject*, 118, emphasis in original.

173. John Wilson Croker, "Preface," in *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1831), xi.

174. A. N. L. Munby, *The Cult of the Autograph Letter in England* (London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1962), 1, 9.

## *Chapter 5 · Leaving "the World"*

1. James Raven, "Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age," in *The English Novel 1770–1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, ed. Peter Garside, James Raven, and Rainer Showerling, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 30–32.

2. Ibid., 31–32.

3. Mary A. Favret, *Romantic Correspondence: Women, Politics and the Fiction of Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 12.

4. Ibid., 4, 12–13.

5. Nicola Watson, *Revolution and the Form of the British Novel, 1790–1825: Intercepted Letters, Interrupted Seductions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 2, 4.

6. Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, vol. 2 (Dublin, 1783), 297.

7. Favret, *Romantic Correspondence*, 4.

8. William B. Warner, *Licensing Entertainment: The Elevation of Novel Reading in Britain, 1684–1750* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), xiii, 15–18.

9. For further discussion of anti-novel discourse in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); E. J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750–1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

10. For further discussion of the emergence of this category see Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700–1810* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Alvin Kernan, *Printing Technology, Letters and Samuel Johnson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987); Paul Keen, *The Crisis of Literature in the 1790s: Print Culture and the Public Sphere* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

11. Austen's works and letters are rife with references to Burney and Edgeworth that emphasize the appreciation and engagement expressed here. Isobel Grundy finds that *Camilla* and

*Sir Charles Grandison* are the two most frequently referenced works in Austen's letters, followed closely by *Evelina*. In 1796, for example, Austen described herself as "just like Camilla in Mr Dubster's summer-house" and noted of a new acquaintance, "There are two Traits in her Character which are pleasing; namely, she admires Camilla, & drinks no cream in her Tea." In 1809 she referenced *Cecilia* by reminding her sister "that Aunt Cassandras are quite as scarce as Miss Beverleys," and when advising her niece Anna Austen on Anna's draft novel, which included a character named Cecilia, she noted, "I do not like a Lover's speaking in the 3$^{d}$ person; it is too much like the formal part of Lord Orville," Evelina's eventual husband. Writing again to Anna in 1814, she said, "I have made up my mind to like no Novels really, but Miss Edgeworth's, Yours, & my own." Isobel Grundy, "Jane Austen and Literary Traditions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 201; Jane Austen, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6, 9, 176, 278, 289. References to Burney and Edgeworth, and their novels, also form part of everyday life in Austen's novels. The title of *Pride and Prejudice* derives from the final chapter of *Cecilia* ("'The whole of this unfortunate business,' said Dr. Lyster, 'has been the result of PRIDE and PREJUDICE'"), while *Sense and Sensibility*'s Willoughby may be a reference to Sir Clement Willoughby, who attempts to seduce Evelina. These ongoing references show Austen's intimate familiarity with the works and put their inclusion in the *Northanger Abbey* defense in context.

12. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 30.

13. Ibid., 31.

14. Jocelyn Harris, *A Revolution Almost Beyond Expression: Jane Austen's "Persuasion"* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 2007), 20–21.

15. Jan Fergus, *Jane Austen: A Literary Life* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 23; Jan Fergus, *Jane Austen and the Didactic Novel: "Northanger Abbey," "Sense and Sensibility," and "Pride and Prejudice"* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble Books, 1983), 62. Mitzi Myers, similarly, speaks for the apparent anomaly of *Belinda* in the list when she notes that the novel is usually seen as a "young lady's-entrance-into-the-world courtship fiction in the Frances Burney tradition, a tame precursor that Jane Austen inexplicably lauds to the skies in *Northanger Abbey*." Mitzi Myers, "My Art Belongs to Daddy? Thomas Day, Maria Edgeworth, and the Pre-Texts of *Belinda*: Women Writers and Patriarchal Authority," in *Revising Women: Eighteenth-Century "Women's Fiction" and Social Engagement*, ed. Paula R. Backscheider (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 104.

16. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 2006, 30, my emphasis.

17. Ibid., 30.

18. "On the Tendency of Novel-Reading," *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, September 1793, 164.

19. Brian Corman, *Women Novelists before Jane Austen: The Critics and Their Canons* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 29–44.

20. For example, while Burney's dedication to *The Wanderer* discusses many of the same themes as Austen's defense—noting that the genre is "never mentioned, even by its supporter, but with a look that fears contempt"—she vindicates novels in distinctly eighteenth-century terms, writing: "What is the species of writing that offers fairer opportunities for conveying useful precepts? . . . It exercises our imaginations; it points out the path of honour; and gives to juvenile credulity knowledge of the world, without ruin, or repentance; and the lessons of experience, without its tears." Frances Burney, *The Wanderer* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2001), 7–8.

21. Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), 3.

22. Clifford Siskin and William Warner, "This Is Enlightenment: An Invitation in the Form of an Argument," in *This Is Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 19.

23. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 2006, 30.

24. Austen, *Jane Austen's Letters*, 326.

25. Edgeworth, *Belinda*, 2008, 10.

26. Ibid., 62, emphasis in original.

27. Ibid., 247, emphasis in original.

28. Christina Lupton, *Knowing Books: The Consciousness of Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 1.

29. Edward Moore, *The World*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1776), 74–5.

30. Lee Erickson, "The Economy of Novel Reading: Jane Austen and the Circulating Library," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 30, no. 4 (Autumn 1990): 574.

31. Barbara M. Benedict, "Sensibility by the Numbers: Austen's Work as Regency Popular Fiction," in *Janeites: Austen's Disciples and Devotees*, ed. Deidre Shauna Lynch (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 65.

32. Erickson, "The Economy of Novel Reading," 573, 580.

33. Ibid., 578.

34. Edward Jacobs, "Anonymous Signatures: Circulating Libraries, Conventionality, and the Production of Gothic Romances," *ELH* 62, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 611–12.

35. Benedict, "Sensibility by the Numbers," 74.

36. Jacobs, "Anonymous Signatures," 623.

37. Henry Mackenzie, *The Lounger*, June 17, 1785, 80.

38. "On the Employment of Time," *Monthly Visitor*, February 1797, 132.

39. Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, vol. 1 (Colchester, 1785), 77.

40. Erickson, "The Economy of Novel Reading," 576.

41. Jacobs, "Anonymous Signatures," 620.

42. Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 76.

43. Ralph Griffiths, ed., "Advertisement," *Monthly Review* 1 (May 1749): 9.

44. Antonia Forster, "Book Reviewing," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain,* ed. Michael F. Suarez SJ and Michael L.Turner, vol. 5, 1695–1830 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 634–35.

45. Carol Percy, "Periodical Reviews and the Rise of Prescriptivism: The *Monthly* (1749–1844) and *Critical Review* (1756–1817) in the Eighteenth Century," in *Current Issues in Late Modern English*, ed. Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade and Wim van der Wurff (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 123.

46. Derek Roper, *Reviewing before the Edinburgh, 1788–1802* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1978), 11, 21. In the late 1790s, the *Monthly Review* had the largest circulation, at 5,000, while the *Critical Review* and the *British Critic* were both at 3,500. When it began in 1751, the *Monthly* had a circulation of between 500 and 1,000 copies, rising to 3,500 by 1776. Both the *Monthly* and the *Critical* expanded from two to three volumes in the early 1790s. Forster, "Book Reviewing," 636–37.

47. "A Short View of the State of Knowledge, Literature, and Taste, in This Country," *New Annual Register*, 1781, xix.

48. "Advertisement," *Edinburgh Review* 1, no. 1 (October 1802): 2.

49. William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 11.

50. Ibid., 11.

51. Michael F. Suarez SJ, "Towards a Bibliometric Analysis of the Surviving Record, 1701–1800," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. Michael F. Suarez SJ and Michael L. Turner, vol. 5, *1695–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 43.

52. Ibid., 48.

53. Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670–1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 220.

54. Michael Gamer calls Edgeworth the "highest paid and most critically acclaimed British novelist of her time." Burney earned £250 for the right to the first printing of *Cecilia*, and she used her fame to sell *Camilla* by subscription, making more than £2,000 on the novel. Michael Gamer, "Maria Edgeworth and the Romance of Real Life," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 232; Margaret Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), 143; Emma E. Pink, "Frances Burney's *Camilla*: 'To Print My Grand Work . . . By Subscription.'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40, no. 1 (2006): 60.

55. Each author also famously had a complicated relationship to the patriarchal authority of the heads of these literary families. Burney feared her father's disapproval of the novel genre and initially hid her authorship of *Evelina*, while Edgeworth ceded credit in "coauthored" works with her father that were in fact her own compositions. For the fullest discussion of these dynamics, see Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Their Fathers' Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Patriarchal Complicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Gallagher, *Nobody's Story*.

56. Frances Burney, *Evelina* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), 9.

57. Ibid., 5.

58. Ibid., 9.

59. Edgeworth, *Belinda*, 2008, 3.

60. Maria Edgeworth to Mme. de Pastoret, 6 June 1814, MA 4789, Morgan Library, New York.

61. See also Joe Bray, *The Female Reader in the English Novel: From Burney to Austen* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 9; Elaine Bander, "The Significance of Jane Austen's Reference to *Camilla* in *Sanditon*: A Note," *Notes and Queries* 25 (1978): 215.

62. Burney, *Evelina*, 2008, 27.

63. William Galperin, *The Historical Austen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 96–102; Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Privacy, Dissimulation, and Propriety: Frances Burney and Jane Austen," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 12, no. 4 (July 2000): 518.

64. For discussion of the suppressed play and its relationship to *Cecilia*, see Francesca Saggini, *Backstage in the Novel: Frances Burney and the Theater Arts* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 133–34.

65. Frances Burney, *Cecilia* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), 3. Just as every one of Burney's novels could bear the subtitle of *Evelina*, the "History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World," so could each be described with the subtitle of 1814's *The Wanderer*, "Female Difficulties." I focus here on *Cecilia* because, as the follow-up to *Evelina*, it is the most direct rewriting of the epistolary, and because it focuses most explicitly on the relationship between the "entrance into the world," reading, and marriage.

66. Ibid., 8.

67. Ibid., 38.

68. Ibid., 52.

69. Ibid., 53.

70. Quoted in Doody, *Frances Burney*, 145.

71. Burney, *Evelina*, 2008, 26, 404.

72. Ibid., 385.

73. Burney, *Cecilia*, 2008, 27.

74. For this reason, John Richetti has called *Evelina* only "nominally" epistolary. John J. Richetti, "Voice and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Haywood to Burney," *Studies in the Novel* 19, no. 3 (Fall 1987): 269.

75. Burney, *Cecilia*, 2008, 81, 430, 654.
76. Ibid., 566–67.
77. Ibid., 577.
78. Ibid., 567.
79. Doody, *Frances Burney*, 101.
80. Burney, *Cecilia*, 2008, 431–32.
81. Ibid., 415.
82. Ibid., 869.
83. Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 48.
84. Burney, *Cecilia*, 2008, 762.
85. Emily Allen, "Staging Identity: Frances Burney's Allegory of Genre," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31, no. 4 (Summer 1998): 436.
86. Saggini, *Backstage in the Novel*, 145.
87. Burney, *Cecilia*, 2008, 31.
88. Ibid., 103.
89. Ibid., 181, 186.
90. Gallagher, *Nobody's Story*, 237.
91. Burney, *Cecilia*, 2008, 941.
92. Quoted in Doody, *Frances Burney*, 145.
93. Quoted in Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick, "Introduction," in *Belinda* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), xi.
94. Susan Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers, 1660–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 200–201.
95. Edgeworth, *Belinda*, 2008, 126.
96. Ibid., 3. Contemporary readers often interpreted Edgeworth's novels as *romans à clef* whose characters could be identified with real-life people, a fact that may help to explain her contradictory, self-disclaiming statements about novel writing. Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 257, 259.
97. Edgeworth, *Belinda*, 2008, 7.
98. Ibid., 25.
99. Ibid., 370.
100. Ibid., 5.
101. Ibid., 10.
102. Kirkpatrick, "Introduction," *Belinda*, xii.
103. Edgeworth, *Belinda*, 2008, 10, 66, 247.
104. Ibid., 126.
105. One prominent strand of anti-novel discourse, evident in works such as *The Female Quixote* (1752), warned that young female readers would be unable to differentiate between fictional and real worlds and would expect their lives to operate according to novelistic formulas. Sarah Raff, "Quixotes, Precepts, and Galateas: The Didactic Novel in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Comparative Literature Studies* 43, no. 4 (2006): 466.
106. Edgeworth, *Belinda*, 2008, 126.
107. Ibid., 381.
108. Ibid., 36, 477.
109. Ibid., 72.
110. Ibid., 9.
111. Ibid., 9, 85.
112. Burney, *Cecilia*, 2008, 943.
113. Ibid., 945, 3.

114. Frances Burney, *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay)*, ed. Joyce Hemlow, Patricia Boutilier, and Althea Douglas, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 222.

115. Pink, "Frances Burney's *Camilla*" 50; Gallagher, *Nobody's Story*, 258–60.

116. The work of these novels in placing appropriate novel reading within the borders of the provincial scene is thus one element in the "development of a strictly female field of knowledge" that Nancy Armstrong has tracked: "It was within this field that novels had to situate themselves if they were to have cultural authority," she writes. Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 14.

117. Pink, "Frances Burney's *Camilla*," 60–64.

118. Jane Aiken Hodge, *Only a Novel: The Double Life of Jane Austen* (New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1972), 207.

119. Benedict, "Sensibility by the Numbers," 63–4.

120. B. C. Southam, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts: A Study of the Novelist's Development through the Surviving Papers* (London: Continuum International, 2006), 58–61.

121. Galperin, *The Historical Austen*, 8.

122. Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 178.

123. Paula Byrne, *Jane Austen and the Theater* (London: Hambledon and London, 2002), 89, 97.

124. Siskin, *The Work of Writing*, 200–205.

125. Austen, *Jane Austen's Letters*, 287.

126. Franco Moretti has "mapped" this shift. As he shows, all of the beginnings and endings of Austen's six novels occur at named estates, while "narrative complications" occur in London and, secondarily, in Bath. This structure creates "Two Englands, where different narrative and axiological functions are literally 'attached' to different spaces." Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800–1900* (London: Verso, 1998), 13, 18, 20.

127. Fergus, *Jane Austen: A Literary Life*, 111–13.

128. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 2006, 1.

129. Walter Scott, "Sir Walter Scott on Jane Austen," in *Famous Reviews*, ed. Reginald Brimley Johnson (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1914), 211.

130. Although *Belinda* was published after the most likely original composition of *Susan*, Edgeworth was already one of Austen's favorite authors, and she revised *Northanger Abbey* to, at the very least, add the reference to *Belinda*. The novel was also not sold to a publisher until after the publication of Edgeworth's work.

131. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 2006, 7, emphasis in original.

132. Ibid., 9.

133. Elaine Bander, "Reading Mysteries at Bath and Northanger," *Persuasions* 32 (2010): 47.

134. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 2006, 33.

135. This line of thinking arose in a conversation with Deidre Shauna Lynch following her talk "*Pride and Prejudice* by Numbers," University of California, Santa Barbara, Nov. 6, 2014.

136. Critics have questioned Austen's actual opposition to gothic and/or sentimental novels and shown how, in Elaine Bander's words, *Northanger Abbey* "erases the boundaries between 'good' and 'bad' categories of novels." George Levine points out that *Northanger Abbey* is "not only a parody" and that Catherine is right to see "monstrousness" in General Tilney, although she misconstrues its thrust. As Levine writes, the novel "depends in part on the dismissal of earlier fictions, but much more on elaboration through those fictions of the subtle discriminations necessary to distinguish true feelings from false, genuine literature from fake." Bander, "Reading Mysteries at Bath and Northanger," 48; George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination: En-*

*glish Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 62, 70.

137. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 2006, 109–10.

138. Janine Barchas argues that Austen used specific references to real-life people and places, through her choice of allusive character names and her careful geography, which "crafted a hybrid of history and the novel." Janine Barchas, *Matters of Fact in Jane Austen: History, Location, and Celebrity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 6, 9.

139. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 2006, 205, 176.

140. Galperin, *The Historical Austen*, 86.

141. Southam, *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts*, 46.

142. Jane Austen, *Later Manuscripts*, ed. Janet Todd and Linda Bree (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3, 5.

143. Ibid., 11–12.

144. Ibid., 40.

145. Ibid., 30, 69.

146. Ibid., 67.

147. Ibid., 69.

148. Ibid., 45, 48.

149. Ibid., 75.

150. Ibid.

151. Ibid., 77.

152. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 108, 123.

153. Ibid., 116.

154. As William Deresiewicz writes, "The early novels are, like Burney's *Evelina*, stories of 'a young lady's entrance into the world.' In the late novels, the young lady is already in the world (Anne), never gets there (Fanny), or has no larger 'world' to enter (Emma)." William Deresiewicz, *Jane Austen and the Romantic Poets* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 28.

155. Edward Said's influential reading of *Mansfield Park* makes a similar point in the context of imperialism. Said argues that Austen's references to Sir Thomas Bertram's colonial properties establish moral and social values in the novel: "The right to colonial possessions helps directly to establish social order and moral priorities at home." The novel's "geographical division of the world" actually shows the interdependence of the two arenas: "What assures the domestic tranquility and attractive harmony of one is the productivity and regulated discipline of the other." Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 62, 93, 87.

156. Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 47.

157. Ibid., 526.

158. Ibid., 501.

159. Ibid., 142–43.

160. Ibid., 164.

161. Ibid., 171.

162. Ibid., 434, 496, 506, 509.

163. Ibid., 512.

164. Ibid., 307, 356.

165. Ibid., 434.

166. Ibid., 491.

167. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 285, 169.

168. Austen, *Mansfield Park*, 2005, 461.

169. Austen, *Jane Austen's Letters*, 71.

170. Michelle Levy, "Austen's Manuscripts and the Publicity of Print," *ELH* 77, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 1014.

171. Edgeworth, *Belinda*, 2008, 247.

172. Scott, "Sir Walter Scott on Jane Austen," 211.

173. Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 2006, 107.

174. Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 2.

## *Postscript*

1. Arcade Fire, "We Used to Wait" (Merge, 2010).

2. Sophie Heawood, "There's No Money in Any of Our Bank Accounts," *NME - New Musical Express*, July 31, 2010, 24.

3. Catherine J. Golden, *Posting It: The Victorian Revolution in Letter Writing* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 121.

4. Ibid., 154.

5. David Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 9.

6. Richard Menke, *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 41.

7. Bernhard Siegert, *Relays: Literature as an Epoch of the Postal System* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 39. Kate Thomas argues, conversely, that in the Victorian period "epistolary fiction gave way to postal plots, in which literary interest lay not in the interiors of letters, but rather their outsides." Kate Thomas, *Postal Pleasures: Sex, Scandal, and Victorian Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2. However, as I have shown, eighteenth-century epistolary fiction had always been invested in the circulation of letters as material texts.

8. Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 275.

9. Ibid., 306. In Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*, by contrast, Juliet spends almost the entirety of the 900-page novel concealing her identity because "she had never ventured to trust to a letter a secret that demanded so much discretion." Juliet is always first and foremost aware of the possibility that her letters could be intercepted and read. Frances Burney, *The Wanderer* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2001), 841.

10. Collins, *The Woman in White*, 1996, 631.

11. Ibid.

12. "London Bridge," *Penny Magazine for the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, March 30, 1832, 41.

13. While concerns about spying and the legal privacy of communications have focused on phone and e-mail communications, it is apparent that using the mail continues to entail a high level of government surveillance. As the *New York Times* revealed in July 2013, following Edward Snowden's disclosure of the National Security Agency's spying programs, the U.S. Postal Service runs the Mail Isolation Control and Tracking program, which photographs the exterior of every piece of mail sent in the United States every year. As Bruce Schneier, a computer security expert and fellow at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, said, "They are doing the same thing as the other programs, collecting the information on the outside of your mail, the metadata, if you will, of names, addresses, return addresses and postmark locations, which gives the government a pretty good map of your contacts, even if they aren't reading the contents." Ron Nixon, "U.S. Postal Service Logging All Mail for Law Enforcement," *New York Times*, July 3, 2013, www.nytimes.com/2013/07/04/us/monitoring-of-snail-mail.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

14. Charlie Beckett, "SuperMedia: The Future as 'Networked Journalism,'" *openDemocracy*, June 10, 2008, www.opendemocracy.net/article/supermedia-the-networked-journalism-future.

15. These terms relate to Raymond Williams's identification of emergent, dominant, and residual forms as levels on which different social and cultural practices are incorporated into hegemonic culture. As Williams makes clear, albeit in a brief consideration, genres are "collective modes" that can be identified through the analysis of related practices. Emergent or residual cultures are those that are not fully incorporated into the dominant one, allowing for alternative or oppositional practices. The pattern of emergence, dominance, and residue provides a structure for cultural change. Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," *New Left Review* 1, no. 82 (December 1973): 11, 16.

16. The method of tracing "continuity and discontinuity" as a means to describe literary change derives from the work of Ralph Cohen. In his essay "History and Genre," for example, he argues that "genre concepts in theory and practice arise, change, and decline for historical reasons." Genres, he argues, are "groupings" of texts that "arise at particular historical moments, and as they include more and more members, they are subject to repeated redefinitions or abandonment." Ralph Cohen, "History and Genre," *New Literary History* 17 (1986): 204, 210.

17. Dan Cohen, "The Blessay," blog, *Dan Cohen* May 24, 2012, www.dancohen.org/2012/05/24/the-blessay/.

18. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 8.

19. Ibid., 259.

This book's central object of inquiry concerns the relationship between the media of manuscript and print in the long eighteenth century. By viewing this relationship through the lens of the written and printed letter, the volume contributes to discussions of epistolary and postal history while also intersecting with a number of fields and subfields that have drawn vibrant scholarly interest in recent years, including those of media studies, book history and bibliography, periodical studies, and the public sphere. In addition, I use my analysis of the ongoing importance of manuscript production and publication throughout the eighteenth century to offer a new model for genre formation. I argue that the letter acted as a "bridge genre" to elicit new forms of writing by connecting existing textual modes with emerging uses of the print medium. This book therefore makes important interventions in scholarly understandings of genre and generic development, arguing for the necessity of considering content and format in tandem. This essay will outline some of the major critical conversations and scholarly works with which this book engages.

## Orality, Literacy, and Print

Since the groundbreaking work of Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, and Elizabeth Eisenstein in the 1960s and '70s, media studies, book history, and print culture studies have emerged as major fields of scholarly attention, and they continue to generate topics of ongoing, intense debate. But despite the widespread adoption of D. F. McKenzie's deceptively simple argument that "forms affect meaning"[1]—and acknowledgment of what he later called the "frankly diverse nature" and "persistive interaction" of speech, writing, and print[2]—the interaction between genre and medium remains underexplored. Scholars tend to separate orality, literacy, and print as media for analysis and to overlook the ways in which individual genres often cut across or draw together these fields. This tendency in many ways follows from Ong's influential analysis of manuscript and print in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the*

*Word* (1982). Ong describes print and manuscript together as "writing," which constitutes a "stage" of society in contrast to "oral culture."[3] Ong offers a progressive model of media development, in which "orality needs to produce and is destined to produce writing" and the "printed text, not the written text, is the text in its fullest, paradigmatic form."[4] Likewise, Michel de Certeau's "scriptural economy" fuses handwriting and printing, which both override and include orality: in the modern "myth" developed since the invention of printing, "The 'oral' is that which does not contribute to progress; reciprocally, the 'scriptural' is that which separates itself from the magical world of voices and tradition."[5] The foundation laid by such scholars in fusing script and print into "writing" or "the text" created a paradigm in which handwriting could either be ignored in discussions of print or treated as a less advanced, always already outmoded precursor.

This perspective is perhaps most evident in studies of eighteenth-century print culture, which is often seen as the endpoint for forms of collaborative, manuscript, and amateur literary and scientific circulation. George Justice pithily summarizes the field when he notes that the eighteenth century is "a period in which the printing press and an attendant public sphere have conventionally been seen as overwhelming the quaint, semi-private circulation of literature in manuscript."[6] Alvin Kernan provides this standard view when he argues that in the mid-eighteenth century "an older system of polite or courtly letters . . . was swept away . . . and gradually replaced by a new print-based, market-centered, democratic literary system," adding that "print destroyed the old oral and manuscript culture."[7] It is generally assumed that, by the eighteenth century, manuscript publication was an effect of inability rather than choice—restricted to women and bad authors—or an aristocratic holdover related to the "stigma of print" for the upper classes.

Important studies of early modern and eighteenth-century manuscript production and circulation have both challenged and reinforced this view. Harold Love and Margaret Ezell each have offered persuasive and comprehensive arguments for the continued centrality of manuscript circulation to professional literary and scientific writing into the eighteenth century.[8] Love and Ezell use the term "publication," now typically associated with printing, to refer to forms of manuscript authorship, and they note that a range of writers and readers—not only the aristocratic or female—preferred scribal publication for the ability to create communities of readers and to offer texts that were amendable and adaptable.[9] As Ezell writes, "For the majority of writers and readers in the period at the turn of the [eighteenth] century, lit-

erary authorship was still understood as an interactive, dynamic, and ongoing exchange."[10] James Raven, meanwhile, has illuminated conditions of the book trade in the 400 years following the invention of printing, arguing that the effects of print constituted "no overnight revolution and change was relatively fitful."[11] But while he notes that "manuscript production and transmission, and the influence of scribal design continued for several centuries,"[12] his interest lies in the development of the printed book market. These influential, wide-ranging studies, while offering detailed analyses of historical conditions of communications, have continued to separate media as units for investigation, and to see, at the latest, a seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century cutoff for the prominence of manuscript texts.

This chronology is also evident in works focused on print, printing, and the rise of "print culture," and particularly in the two works that have shaped the field of print-culture studies: Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979) and Adrian Johns's *The Nature of the Book* (1998). While these scholars offer generative descriptions of the disparate techniques, practices, and strategies that made up a seemingly monolithic "print culture," their works focus almost exclusively on print, often falling back on basic divisions between media. Both Eisenstein and Johns offer studies of what they call "print culture," although they disagree about whether to focus on technology itself or on the practitioners and attitudes surrounding that technology. Johns describes his work as a "social history of print" and an "attempt to portray print culture in the making";[13] with this orientation, he tends to assume that print in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the primary medium for those involved in textual production even as he argues that the "meanings" associated with print were contingent and not inherent in the technology.[14] Eisenstein's work in fact attends more to the ways print and manuscript were in negotiation after the advent of printing, although she maintains a divide between the two. Indeed, she defines "print culture" in terms of a contrast with "scribal culture": the latter, she writes in a footnote, is "a shorthand way of referring to such activities as producing and duplicating books, transmitting messages, reporting news and storing data after the invention of writing and before that of movable type," while "print culture" refers "only to post-Gutenberg developments in the West."[15] Although she notes that early printing relied on existing scribal modes of book production—for example, many incunables were drawn from a backlog of scribal material, and their format and design copied manuscript features—she argues that this period of overlap was relatively short-lived, from 20 to 100 years after the invention of

printing.[16] Eisenstein's call for a "sharp line" between print culture and scribal culture leads her to emphasize the differences between media and downplay moments of crossover or interdependence.

In recent years, a number of scholars—following on from McKenzie's pointers about the simultaneous nature of media cultures—have offered models that emphasize rather than ignore the overlap of orality, literacy, and print. David McKitterick's *Print, Manuscript, and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (2003) goes beyond traditional period boundaries to show the gradual, dispersed, and uneven effects of printing innovations. McKitterick writes that a conceptual separation of print and manuscript as forms of communication followed a 350-year-long "period of accommodation" in which authors, printers, readers, and booksellers viewed both as media of textual production that had similarities and differences.[17] He points out that "fully functioning" copies of texts often required the simultaneous deployment of script and print, and uses close bibliographical analysis to draw a large-scale framework: "The new can only be understood by reference to the old, and different cultures and media must inevitably exist side by side. . . . In practice, each new technology does not replace the previous one. Rather, it augments it, and offers alternatives."[18] While McKitterick focuses on early modern Europe, Matt Cohen makes similar points about the fluid media environment of seventeenth-century America, investigating Puritan and native networks of spoken, inscribed, performed, and communal technologies. As he writes, "communication happens on a spectrum of media modes."[19] This model of a continuum or spectrum for media is becoming increasingly common and is one that I develop in this book.

Scholars of contemporary and digital media both reflect on past moments of media transition and offer analyses of today's environment that may translate to previous eras. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's concept of "remediation"—departing from McLuhan's observation that "the 'content' of any medium is always another medium"[20]—has become a reigning paradigm to explain the introduction of digital media. While Bolter and Grusin argue that remediation, the "representation of one medium in another," is a concept that "offers us a means of interpreting the work of earlier media as well," their focus is on digital media, and they represent remediation as a progressive, linear process.[21] Katherine Hayles also looks at the continuing presence of old media in the new with her metaphor of the "skeuomorph," a term she adapts from archaeological anthropology to signify a "design feature that is no longer functional in itself but that refers back to a feature that was functional at

an earlier time."[22] This term differs from my concept of bridging, as a bridge genre maintains its previous functions in the new medium. When generic conventions are no longer functional but are, rather, referential, the bridge genre has ceased to operate. This book therefore draws from such innovative work on new media by proposing, in the bridge genre, a model for media change that can apply to many historical moments and that provides a framework for discussing not only media progression or displacement, but also the ongoing overlap and interpenetration that is central to any period of transition.

## Epistolary and Periodical Studies

The role of the letter in the rise of the novel has been a critical commonplace since the novel became a subject of academic study in the mid-twentieth century. Ian Watt credited the epistolary form of Richardson's novels with giving them their "subjective, individualist and private orientation" and maintained the traditional association between women and letters and, therefore, between letters and sentimental novels.[23] Feminist studies of epistolary novels reclaimed this position by valorizing the genre as establishing a feminine perspective against a hostile masculine power structure. Janet Gurkin Altman argues that all examples of the epistolary format or epistolary genre, by which she means the novel-in-letters, have similarities in thematic relations, character types, narrative events, and organization owing to their "epistolarity," "the use of the letter's formal properties to create meaning." The epistolary novel, she writes, seems "tailored for the love plot" because the letter acts as "a mediator of desire in the communication process."[24] Similarly, Linda S. Kauffman's *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre, and Epistolary Fictions* (1986) and Ruth Perry's *Women, Letters, and the Novel* (1980) take as their starting points a presumed association between the three primary terms of Perry's title. The epistolary novel was popular for feminist critics because it was understood as an inherently feminine genre.

Recent historical and bibliographical studies of early modern and eighteenth-century letter writing, however, have emphasized the extent to which the novel-in-letters was one among many epistolary genres in the period, and perhaps not even the most prominent or influential. As Peter V. Conroy early noted, "By adopting the epistolary format, the novel bound itself to respect the same conventions as the letter. It took upon itself that particular way of rendering the outside world that the letter had already conditioned the reading public to accept as normal."[25] Konstantin Dierks' study of letter writing in eighteenth-century America, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communica-*

*tions in Early America* (2009), describes the many ways in which the expansion of letter writing in the period helped to create a new "documentary culture" that "enabled an unparalleled interconnection of city to nation, nation to empire, and empire to world." The letter, he writes, was the "common denominator" of the many different genres of this "culture."[26] But while Dierks notes that "the reading public in Britain and the colonies was thoroughly accustomed to encountering letters everywhere in print culture,"[27] his main interest lies in the ways in which "ordinary" Americans used personal letters to forge ideologies of agency. This focus on manuscript means that he uses a variety of terms to describe epistolary writing—calling the letter a genre, a medium, or a motif, among other vocabulary—without clarifying distinctions in this terminology. Susan Whyman's *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers, 1660–1800* (2009) also brings together a broad range of literary and historical evidence on the rising importance of what she terms "epistolary literacy" and notes the influence of printed genres like novels, newspapers, and manuals on personal letters;[28] at the same time, she continues to focus on individual handwritten epistles as her primary evidence and to assume their private nature. In epistolary studies, there remains much work to be done on the range of ways in which the letter genre flowed across media of communication at this time.

David Henkin's *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (2006) marshals a wide range of manuscript and printed evidence to argue that the expansion and reform of the U.S. postal system in the mid-nineteenth century led to the development of a "broadly inclusive network" of interconnection.[29] Henkin writes that Americans were increasingly aware of and self-conscious about their ability to imagine new types of communication and connection through postal networks, and he demonstrates how such networks covered a wide variety of epistolary categories—from business and love letters to newspapers, pornography, advertisements, and familiar correspondence. Henkin's focus on the United States, where, as he notes, the postal system was much less systematized and centralized than in Britain, means that he assigns a relatively late date to the awareness of networked communications for which his work persuasively argues. Clare Brant's *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (2006), meanwhile, offers an illuminating and comprehensive survey of manuscript and print letters as they crossed public and private divides, but her interest in particularizing letters—the "innumerable texts which share identifiable markers of genre yet do not make a stable genre," she argues[30]—means that her work tends more to catalogue letters across the eighteenth century than to trace their

development as a genre.[31] Her book elucidates the conditions of eighteenth-century writing in a way that emphasizes but does not theorize the role of epistolary print.

While recent studies of eighteenth-century epistolary writing have, then, focused on manuscript letters and archival investigation, the field of periodical studies has emerged as what Sean Latham and Robert Scholes call "a subfield of print culture—an especially important and lively subfield."[32] Scholars of periodicals have offered important correctives to book historical investigations that treat the codex as the archetype of publishing and ignore the prevalence of "ephemeral" materials such as newspapers, essays, and magazines. Manushag Powell notes that, while the very heterogeneity of periodicals makes them difficult subjects of study, scholars should be able to "embrace [the] field's cacophony as an enabling paradox" that offers new understandings of publication and authorship. The need to place particular periodical authors or articles in contextual networks can offer a model for literary investigation in general.[33] And Jean Marie Lutes notes that periodicals are important sites to recover female authors, since it was often easier to publish in those venues than in the more prestigious and expensive book form. As she writes, "The recovery work demanded by periodical studies involves the recovery not just of selected texts but also of dynamic print environments in which multiple texts self-consciously respond to each other."[34] The expansion of literary analysis to such "non-literary" texts speaks to a wide range of concerns in textual criticism today. By bringing together the fields of periodical and epistolary studies, I show how many of the features that critics have emphasized as specific to periodicals—their lack of unitary authorship, their heterogeneity of topics, their dispersal of authority, and their continuous, unbounded nature—are an effect of their early reliance on letters to the editor and epistolary contributions. My work expands understandings of periodicals by showing their important manuscript basis.

## The Public Sphere

The periodical has also been seen as central to the influential concept of the public sphere, which remains a topic of debate decades after its introduction in the work of Jürgen Habermas. As Powell notes, "periodicals . . . are given a place of privilege in the foundation of the public sphere";[35] for Habermas, the periodical is one of the key "institutions of the public sphere."[36] In the eighteenth century, it provided one of the first forums in which private people could come together to form a public, "which from the outset was a reading

public."[37] Periodicals were, in theory, generally accessible to any reader, and their promotion of critical engagement with politics and literature meant that "within a public everyone was entitled to judge."[38] Extending Habermas's argument to the American context, Michael Warner has similarly focused on print periodicals, which he describes as the "proper medium of the public" in the eighteenth century.[39] Readers assumed that print was "normally impersonal," meaning that it was directed not to an individual reader but to a potentially unlimited group of readers—the public sphere.[40] In each of these influential accounts, print is integral to publicity and in opposition to the privacy of manuscript.

But despite Habermas's naming of specific periodicals such as the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, and his claim that the public sphere is a historical category situated in turn-of-the-eighteenth-century England and France, his model often does not bear weight when confronted with particular historical media circumstances. Feminist critiques of the public sphere, such as those by Nancy Fraser and Kathryn Shevelow, have pointed to the exclusion of women from the "general public" as a historical social circumstance that raises questions for the model as a whole.[41] The lack of specificity in regard to media is similarly problematic, and it manifests in the language used to describe print and periodicals: at times, the "medium" of the public sphere is "people's public use of their reason," while at others it is "discussion" or, later, the "critical public."[42] This amorphous use of "medium" makes it difficult to track the specific role of the medium of print in the argument. In many ways, Warner's *Letters of the Republic* (1990) is more sensitive to the dynamics of media and their meanings. Warner argues that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries print came to be defined through a negative relationship to the hand and that forms of manuscript reproduction and circulation do not count as publication in the same way as printing "because their metonymic link to the hand is too strong." He continues, "At a certain point printing came to be specially defined as publication, now *in opposition* to manuscript circulation."[43] Warner emphasizes the construction of a meaning for print rather than assuming its inherently public character; in a later work, he argues that a public is a space of discourse that cannot be restricted to a single medium but is, rather, defined by the "concatenation of texts through time."[44] But, like Habermas, Warner maintains a separation between private manuscript and public print in the eighteenth century, an orienting standpoint that colors his description of historical media conditions.

The Habermasian public sphere offers a powerful framework to integrate

a number of emergent eighteenth-century discourses, but it has also promoted a focus on printed works and "print culture" and suppressed arguments about the continued public role of manuscript circulation in the period. By demonstrating the key role that manuscript letters and the letter genre played in precisely the printed periodicals that have been seen as central to the public sphere, I demonstrate the lack of a clean differentiation between manuscript and print in discourse about public affairs. For Habermas, the letter is the quintessential private form, the genre in which "the individual unfolded himself in his subjectivity" within the bosom of the domestic bourgeois family.[45] By focusing on the often communal, formulaic, and open nature of letters in the period, I provide a different understanding of the ways in which writers and readers participated in publics. Attention to archival materials and actual processes of communication thus yields a more accurate and specific view of the public-private relationship.

Patricia Meyer Spacks has noted the difference between the private, meaning the domestic bourgeois realm, and privacy as an abstract goal or condition; she argues, "Privacy . . . has relatively little to do with the much-debated split between 'public' and 'private.'"[46] Spacks notes that privacy, which may be lacking even within the private sphere, signaled a nexus of concerns in the eighteenth century. Many of these concerns, I note, emerge in the diverse ways letter writers use the terms "private" and "public." The former often corresponds more to the sense of "secret" than to either the domestic realm or individual interiority within it; a more accurate synonym for our contemporary use of "private" may be "personal," as in the personal letters that became the subject of writing manuals and, later, epistolary novels. References to the public, meanwhile, frequently correspond to the sense of state or military concerns. Writers also tended to use "public" to mean visible or available to others, as in the denomination of parks, theaters, and assembly halls as "public places." For the upper classes these "public places" extended into private residences, which were also the sites of visits, balls, and salons. And finally, there was a growing association toward the end of the seventeenth century between printing and publicity; at the same time, manuscript letters were in their own way "public," as they were shared and forwarded among friends or often became material for printing.

This diversity of meanings for "public" and "private" highlights the care with which scholars should avoid imposing contemporary understandings of the terms onto their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century usage. John Brewer argues that the letter constitutes a "border case" that helps to elucidate the

nature of this relationship; while letters have been seen as "one of the signs of modern privacy," "it was and is exceptionally difficult to retain the integrity of private correspondence," and letters in print developed the "skills of private revelation and intimate conversation."[47] Similarly, I add to the work of scholars including Fraser and Craig Calhoun, who have questioned the actual historical openness of the public sphere to a "general public," by noting the particular nature of the address in many printed periodicals.[48] Authors such as Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison, and Richard Steele often directed their printed essays to friends and acquaintances in their professional and social circles; in the final issue of the *Spectator*'s first run, Steele highlighted the contributions of individual, named collaborators.[49] Early periodicals often functioned more like open letters circulated among semi-select groups than like the nationwide "imagined communities" described by Benedict Anderson. This book takes a new approach to the concept of the public sphere by showing both the importance of manuscript writing in creating eighteenth-century publics and the lack of a unified, general public.

## Genre

In recent years, genre has reemerged as a driving force in literary study. From declared obsolescence (for opposing reasons) under the regimes of both New Criticism and post-structuralism, to uneasy commingling with a New Historicism that sometimes found genre categories insufficiently contingent, genre is once again seen as a key analytic metric for literary history. The interventions this book makes in theories of print culture, letters, periodicals, and the public sphere derive from the new model it proposes for the formation of genres in literary history. The concept of the bridge genre links the development of genres and media, showing how specific genres connect existing and emerging media to facilitate the formation of new literary forms. It therefore integrates trends in genre theory with book history and new materialism, understanding genre as an umbrella category that comprehends different media.

Genres are classificatory groupings that have both prescriptive and descriptive force; they include both observed and potential features and conventions. In this definition, I draw from Ralph Cohen's point that genres are "empirical, not logical. They are historical assumptions constructed by authors, audiences, and critics in order to serve communicative and aesthetic purposes."[50] At the same time, writers, readers, and critics have seen genre as offering some prescriptive power—as setting a zone of expectation that can be reinforced or subverted. Jacques Derrida called this the "law of genre" and

argued that any attempt to define a genre undoes it since no genre can be defined by a particular trait.[51] However, more recent considerations of genre attempt to reconcile the empirical-logical impasse. Jonathan Culler argues that, even as genres are historically contingent, empirical categories, they also have theoretic or taxonomic dimensions: they act as frames for reading and writing and relate individual works to each other.[52] Gerard Genette adds that empirical observation of genre categories relies upon initial theoretical classifications: genres are "established by observation of the historical facts or, if need be, by extrapolation from those facts—that is, by a deductive activity superimposed on an initial activity that is always inductive and analytical."[53] Likewise, John Frow sees genre as a "universal dimension of textuality" that "both enables and restricts meaning, and is a basic condition for meaning to take place."[54] For this reason, Wai Chee Dimock calls genres "virtual," in that each example represents a fraction of its potential components, and argues that their key features are "stackability, switchability, and scalability."[55] Indeed, the language of digital media has helped to revitalize genre theory, as efforts to train computer programs to recognize genre, such as those ongoing at the Stanford Literary Lab, reveal both the discrete features that constitute particular genres and the profound overlap and mixture between genres.[56] Genre analysis, as Dimock points out, mediates between close and distant reading, demonstrating macro-level kinships through micro-level textual evidence.[57]

The concept of the bridge genre shifts away from the *mise en abyme* of the prescriptive-descriptive debate, turning attention from what genres are to what they do. Thomas Beebee has argued in favor of defining a genre through its "use-value," rather than by trying to identify an inherent set of traits, arguing "that generic differences are grounded in the 'use-value' of a discourse rather than in its content, formal features, or its rules of production." Genre, he adds, gives the reader or writer a "handle" on the text.[58] Alastair Fowler adds that genres do not restrict but, rather, facilitate expression, and the relationship of any individual work to the genre category "is not one of passive membership but of active modulation."[59] Similarly, I focus on the uses or functions of bridging that certain genres exhibit. A genre is both acted upon—defined, redefined, abandoned—by human actors and can operate as a nonhuman actant in Bruno Latour's terms: "*any thing* that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference," which "might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on."[60] Genres offer avenues of action and have their own agency.

In its attention to the meaningful work of literary classifications in en-

abling writers and readers to create, circulate, and interpret texts, this book thus engages with the methodology of New Formalism. J. Paul Hunter notes that the rejection of formalism in the New Historicism similarly fell into the prescriptive-descriptive trap, as scholars saw formal analysis as either irrelevant to historical context or rigidly deterministic.[61] He rejects an opposition between formalism and historicism, noting that close attention to formal features "can be an important tool for baring historical practices that have become obscured or even invisible to us in later ages or other cultures."[62] Since Kant, form has been seen as a specially literary and aesthetic category, one tending at times to ahistoricism and organicism. New Formalism aims to recuperate for a post–New Historicism discipline the specific attention to formal features, particularly through the practice of close reading, while maintaining the benefits of a historically inflected methodology. As Douglas Bruster writes, it "sees language and literary forms . . . as socially, politically, and historically 'thick.'"[63] Stephen Cohen, likewise, calls for a "historical formalism" that would see form as a mediation that "not only provides the middle term . . . between theatricality or literature 'in general' and individual plays/texts, but also mediates two of the more vexed relationships in historical criticism, those between author and audience (or intention and reception) and between text and social context."[64] Indeed, as I have shown in this book, an attention to the work of the letter genre reveals how writers, readers, publishers, critics, advertisers, and others participate in the production and interpretation of texts without the problematic figure of the abstract or implied reader. But while Heather Dubrow argues that "genre has come to function as a prototype for form,"[65] I understand genre as a larger category than form, and form as one feature of genre. Literary form is a textual property—a recognition of certain kinds and arrangements of words on a page—but genre is inseparable from the other key concept that I have charted in this book, that of medium. Form is a feature, but not necessarily a defining feature, of genre.

This volume therefore concurs with Mikhail Bakhtin's contention that genres are the "great heroes" of language and literature, "whose 'trends' and 'schools' are but second- or third-rank protagonists."[66] Franco Moretti calls genres the "temporary structures" of literary history, "morphological arrangements that *last* in time, but always only for *some* time." Genre analysis allows critics to move from individual texts to the larger cycles of literature.[67] Genre here becomes a primary tool for describing change, as the individual bridge genre provides a platform for authors and readers to expand and transfer conventions of writing from one medium to another. The bridge genre

concept expands upon Tzvetan Todorov's discussion of the origin of genres when he asks and answers: "Where do genres come from? Quite simply from other genres. A new genre is always the transformation of an earlier one, or of several: by inversion, by displacement, by combination."[68] Attention to the on-the-ground processes of generic development can unsettle traditional literary periods or orienting narratives such as the "rise of the novel," allowing scholars to look anew at the major trends of literary history. The concept of the bridge genre and the model of generic investigation that this book has proposed offer new means to understand the interpenetration of genre and media categories in the eighteenth century and today.

## Notes

1. D. F. McKenzie, "The Book as an Expressive Form," in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (London: Routledge, 2006), 37.

2. D. F. McKenzie, "The Sociology of a Text: Orality, Literacy and Print in Early New Zealand," in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (London: Routledge, 2006), 205.

3. Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 77.

4. Ibid., 14, 128.

5. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 131, 134.

6. George Justice, "The Social World of Authorship 1660–1714," *The Scriblerian and the Kit-Cats* 38, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 279.

7. Alvin Kernan, *Printing Technology, Letters and Samuel Johnson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 4, 8.

8. Harold Love, *The Culture and Commerce of Texts: Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998); Margaret J. M. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). Michelle Levy extends the chronology forward, arguing that the Romantic period saw a vital culture of manuscript authorship centered in the family, a phenomenon that "lies on the cusp between a vanishing manuscript culture and the dominance of print." Michelle Levy, *Family Authorship and Romantic Print Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 2.

9. Likewise, Arthur Marotti has focused on manuscript publication of lyric poetry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, arguing that "the two systems of literary transmission [manuscript and print] not only competed but also influenced each other and, to a great extent, coexisted by performing different cultural functions." However, he sees print as replacing manuscript as the norm for poetic writing by the Restoration. Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 1, 68–9.

10. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print*, 111.

11. James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 10.

12. Ibid.

13. Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 6, 3.

14. Johns argues, for example, that early printers contrasted print and manuscript in order

to make their technology appear more authoritative and permanent: "The contrast they drew was with previous scribal forms of reproduction, which they delineated as intrinsically corruptive." Ibid., 5.

15. Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformation in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 9, n. 18.

16. Ibid., 26, 51.

17. David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21–36, 59.

18. Ibid., 33, 20.

19. Matt Cohen, *The Networked Wilderness: Communicating in Early New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 11.

20. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 8.

21. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 45, 55.

22. N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 16.

23. Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 176.

24. Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982), 4, 14, 19.

25. Peter V. Conroy Jr., "Real Fiction: Authenticity in the French Epistolary Novel," *Romantic Review* 72, no. 4 (November 1981): 413.

26. Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 12.

27. Ibid., 152.

28. Susan Whyman, *The Pen and the People: English Letter Writers, 1660–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 9.

29. David Henkin, *The Postal Age: The Emergence of Modern Communications in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 2–7, 25.

30. Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2.

31. Gary Schneider's *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500–1700* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005) performs a similar function for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, providing a historical overview of the material and sociocultural status of the letter.

32. Sean Latham and Robert Scholes, "The Rise of Periodical Studies," *PMLA* 121, no. 2 (March 2006): 520–21.

33. Manushag Powell, "Afterword: We Other Periodicalists, Or, Why Periodical Studies?," *TSWL* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 441, 443.

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